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Margot Norman on the dilemma that faces all working mothers, page 18

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THE TIMES

No. 65,130 TUESDAY DECEMBER 6 1994

'Tax or cuts' threat on eve of vote

Clarke bids to scare off Tory rebels

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

Boyson attack

Rhodes Boyson, the former Tory minister, made a scathing attack on VAT on fuel during the fourth day of the debate on the Budget yesterday. Page 12

was being issued emphasised how seriously ministers are concerned about losing tonight's procedural vote, which would allow for a later vote on the principle of VAT on fuel.

As ministers found themselves facing yet another cliff-hanger, John Major and his Cabinet colleagues were coming under increasing criticism over their decision to make last week's European finance vote an issue of confidence, which backfired and wiped out the Tories' parliamentary majority. In an article in *The Times* today, Sir George Gardiner, chairman of the right-wing 92 group, says it is a crisis entirely of the Cabinet's making. There had been no need for ministers to "panic and sign a suicide pact".

The decision by Mr Sumner, MP for Bury South, to join the revolt made the Government's position even more perilous, even though the whips maintained last night that they would squeak through.

Mr Sumner said that he had reluctantly supported the imposition of VAT two years ago. But with the economy improving and the Government on course for public expenditure cuts, a political decision was needed to reverse the measure. "I fear that if we do not now respond to criticism and limit VAT on fuel to 8 per cent, whatever we do in future Budgets this will come back to haunt us." He said he believed that he was helping the Government by his action, and eventually it could help to win the next election "under the present Prime Minister".

Mr Clarke said: "The House of Commons would make itself extremely foolish if everyone, having more or less endorsed most of this Budget, decided, because revenue raising is unpopular, to opt out of a measure Parliament approved of last year. It isn't even this year's Budget."

All the signs yesterday were that tonight's vote will go to the wire. If eight Tory MPs or those who have been deprived of the whip vote against the Government, it will lose.

Tories voting against the Government are expected to include Nicholas Winterton, Mr Sumner and two "whippers" MPs, Sir Richard Body and Richard Shepherd. The number of abstentions will be crucial and are expected to include Phil Galle, Ann Winterton, Sir Nicholas Fairbairn and another rebel from last week, Michael Cartliss.

The intentions of Euro-rebels Christopher Gill and Tony Marlow, and Andrew Bowden, Paul Marland, Sir Rhodes Boyson, and Harry Greenway were unclear last night.

Rebels buoyed, page 12
George Gardiner, page 20
Leading article, page 21



Jacques Delors flanked by Bill Clinton and Helmut Kohl at the Budapest talks

Yeltsin clashes with Clinton over 'Nato at Russia's door'

By Michael Binyon and Nicholas Wood

A SHARP blast from the Cold War blew through the European security conference in Budapest yesterday with an impassioned denunciation by President Yeltsin of American proposals to expand Nato membership and a tough warning that he would not permit the Atlantic Alliance to threaten the frontiers of an isolated Russia.

His outspoken attack on Washington's proposals to speed up Nato membership for Central and Eastern Europeans was a sharp personal rebuff to President Clinton, who minutes before had told the opening session of the 52-nation Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe that no country had the right to veto new members.

President Yeltsin, warning that such plans were "sowing the seeds of mistrust", demanded why Nato needed to expand. "After all, we are no longer enemies and we are practically all partners," he said that in its search for a new role Nato, a creature of the Cold War, should not create "new poles of opposition" but should bring Europe closer together. "If it is the intention to move Nato's boundaries of responsibility up to Russia's frontier, I have only one thing to say: it's too soon to bury democracy in Russia."

Mr Yeltsin also insisted that Europe, having escaped the Cold War, should not plunge into a cold peace. With withering sarcasm directed straight at the White House, he said: "It is a dangerous delusion to suppose that the destinies of continents and of the world community can somehow be managed from a single capital."

His outburst explains why Andrei Kozyrev, the Russian Foreign Minister, dismayed Western leaders last week by refusing at the last moment to sign Russia's *Partnership for Peace* agreement with Nato, a halfway house to full membership. It was the more astonishing coming, as it did, immediately after Mr Clinton's opening address in which he justified the "further steps" taken by the 16-nation Atlantic Alliance in Brussels last week to study proposals for additional members. He said new members would join country by country, gradually and openly.

"Nato will not automatically exclude any nation from joining," Mr Clinton said in a clear reference to Russia —

despite expert opinion that it would be impossible to integrate the vast Russian military machine with Nato. But then in a warning to Moscow he added: "No country outside will be allowed to veto expansion."

John Major sought to play down the new East-West rift but there were signals that Britain and its Nato allies had more sympathy for Mr Yeltsin's position than for Mr Clinton's.

Budapest talks, pages 14, 15
Anatol Lieven, page 20
Leading article, page 21



Yeltsin: accused West of sowing mistrust

Achille Lauro survivors accuse crew of looting

FROM SAM KILEY IN MOMBASA

ANGRY passengers from the *Achille Lauro* yesterday accused her crew of incompetence, cowardice and looting during the fire which forced nearly 1,000 people to abandon ship last week.

The survivors also alleged that the lifeboats' engines failed to start, rotten oars disintegrated and there was no food or water. Last week Public Fiori, the Italian Transport Minister, said the *Achille Lauro* had passed all safety checks before she left Genoa on November 19. "Everything was in order," he said.

Tony Webb, a Briton who lives in South Africa, said: "The crew were the first to the lifeboats and many of them were carrying well-stuffed bag liners. Others had huge bags."

Gwen Maillard from Lisburn, Northern Ireland, said: "The Italian and South American crew were seen by several passengers going through the cabins and the shops and helping themselves to valuables. When they were on the *Hawaiian King* [a tanker which picked up many of the crew], they wore more jewellery than the Queen and played with videos and cameras they could never afford."

Colonel William de Jong, a Dutch army parachute commander, said that one officer had thrown away his epaulettes overboard on the lifeboat they had shared in order to impersonate a passenger.

However, last night Natale Arcuri, the chief spokesman for StarLauro, the ship's owners, rejected the criticism. "It's all false," he said. "Naturally there are some passengers who complained about some things. But these things are marginal in a rescue operation that involved 1,000 people, [and] lasted over 10 hours."

Nigel Jopling from Lisburn, Northern Ireland, said that many lifeboats, including the one he was on, had engines with flat batteries, no food or water on board, leaked and oars which broke in the passengers' hands. Mr Jopling confronted Giuseppe Orsi, the ship's captain, at a press conference yesterday but Captain Orsi refused to respond.

Signor Fiori said he would form a committee of inquiry into the rescue and the cause of the fire.

Britons bitter, page 5

Mercury cuts off 2,500 jobs

Mercury, Britain's second largest telephone company, will slash 2,500 jobs by the end of next year and scrap its payphones. The streamlining will cost the company £120 million. Page 25

Bentsen prepares to leave Clinton

President Clinton is about to lose his wisest, most experienced adviser and the sole member of his Cabinet with the stature to handle the new Republican Congress. Lloyd Bentsen, 73, is preparing to resign as Treasury Secretary. Page 16

Labour attacked

Ministers yesterday launched a concerted attack on proposals put forward by Labour's Jack Straw to slim down the monarchy, claiming the plans would result in "the break-up of Britain". Page 2

Pensioners win in home help claim

By Ian Murray, Community Correspondent

TWO disabled pensioners yesterday won the first round of a legal battle to keep their home helps in a case that threatens to tear apart the Government's community care funding policy.

In a test case, Wesley Mahfood, 75, and Michael Barry, 79, both of Gloucester, were given leave to seek an urgent judicial review of the decision by Gloucestershire County Council to withdraw their home helps last September. At least 13 similar cases against other local authorities are awaiting the High Court ruling, due in February. The court must decide if the council is in breach of its duties under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act.

After yesterday's hearing Deryk Mead, Gloucestershire Director of Social Services, said: "The implications are immense for authorities throughout the country, many of whom find themselves in a position similar to or worse than ours."

Mark Oakes, of the Association of County Councils, said members hoped that the ruling would force the Government to increase funding of local government. He said: "Last week's Budget limited our spending on this to £647.6 million and we estimate that will be £210 million less than is needed. Perhaps this case will help convince the Government that we just cannot provide the services we are supposed to for the money they give us."

The case was brought by the pressure group Voice of Disabled People, whose chairman Derek Vizor said that about 3,000 people in Gloucestershire were affected by an average 40 per cent withdrawal of home care services since October.

D-Day Teddy Girl emigrates to Japan for £110,000

By Alan Hamilton

A FEMALE teddy bear that took part in the Normandy invasion was sold at auction yesterday for £110,000, double the previous world record price for her species.

Teddy Girl was bought on behalf of Yoshitomo Sekiguchi, president of the Sun Arrow toy company of Japan, where the bear has yet to catch on as every child's bedfellow. Mr Sekiguchi plans to open a bear museum at his factory near Tokyo. Teddy Girl, now aged 90, barely ruffled her immaculate cinnamon mohair fur at the news of her impending emigration.

The bear, still in excellent condition, belonged to the late Colonel Bob Henderson, a prominent collector, who died in

Edinburgh in 1990 in a house filled with 500 teddies. His most prized possession accompanied him everywhere from his early childhood, including his landing on the D-Day beaches where he was a small-arms adviser to Field Marshal Montgomery.

On his retirement from the army Colonel Henderson founded Good Bears of the World, a charity dedicated to donating teddies to deprived children. His entire collection went under the hammer yesterday because, according to the colonel's tearful granddaughter Mrs Deirdre Henderson, she could no longer afford the insurance.

Teddy Girl's value arises not only from her colourful life but from her age and circumstances of birth. She was manufactured in 1904 by the German toy firm

Steiff and is one of that firm's earliest surviving jointed plush teddy bears. A spokeswoman for Christies, the auctioneers, said the world was unlikely ever to see such a fine specimen for sale again.

Speaking through an interpreter, Mr Sekiguchi said: "I have already got 2,000 bears, but this one cost more than all the others put together. I wanted her, not only because she is so cute and good-looking, but because of the great story behind her." Teddy Girl's buyer also acquired a fully documented history of the bear's life, including photographs of her with her master at an early age.


The previous auction record for a bear was set at Sotheby's in 1989, when an animal named Happy changed hands for £55,000.



Top toy: set record price of £110,000

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Live and unplugged, the quiet man of Bury keeps us waiting again

It was around six o'clock yesterday evening. Outside it was raining. Inside, such MPs as had arrived in London from their weekend constituency retreats will have been in the Tea Room finishing their tea, in the bar anticipating their dinner, or signing Christmas cards.

From an almost empty Press Gallery I stared down at an almost empty Chamber. There were twelve Members on the Government side, eight on the Opposition. Deputy Speaker Michael Morris was in the

Chair while the House debated the imposition of a further 9½ per cent VAT on fuel. One Treasury minister was there: we knew where he stood. Chris Smith, one of Labour's Treasury spokesmen, sat opposite. We knew his views. No surprises here.

But one small surprise was visible: a surprise waiting to happen. Sitting shyly and shuffling his notes, a small, redheaded man could be seen near the back of the Tory benches. This was Mr David Sumberg. Sumberg (Bury S)

has never sought the limelight. He waited nearly five months after being elected to make his Maiden Speech on October 31, 1993. "I am conscious that I come towards the tail end of the batting order," he said, ruefully. Your sketchwriter remembers how nervous he looked. "I am sure that the next time he addresses the House he will not find it so awe-inspiring," said Dafydd Wigley, who followed him.

As it turned out, Sumberg was never destined for oratory. Leading a short debate

did not include me." Since being elected, he added, he had appeared only twice on television. The first was when he was mistaken for Ronnie Corbett. The second was when it was revealed that he was one of six MPs who were freemasons. Before becoming an MP, Sumberg revealed, he had made one TV appearance: on *Sale of the Century*.

So it is meant as no disrespect to the diminutive ginger-topped freemason, quiz-contestant and weathermanesque Ronnie Corbett lookalike with an abiding interest in electric plugs, to observe that he would be an unlikely addition to the high command of a peasants' rebellion. But he may be. David Sumberg was rumoured to be the latest, quietest, finest recruit to the Tory backbench revolt on VAT on fuel. As this column's deadline approached, he was waiting to speak: would he shock the House, the world, and Bury?

For Sumberg, it could be a turning point, an epic day. Was this, at last, an end to backbench submission? Could Conviction at last take wing? Up he leaped, again and again in a vain attempt to catch Mr Morris's eye. It is somehow typical of Sumberg's doughty but unremarked career that the Deputy Speaker did not seem to have noticed him. As I left, he was still waiting to speak. It is known that he had returned from a grilling in the whips' office. Had the hard-faced men succeeded? The world held its breath. By this morning you may know.

Straw attack on royalty diverts fire from VAT

By Jill Sherman and Alice Thomson

MINISTERS yesterday launched a concerted attack on Labour proposals to slim down the monarchy, claiming the plans would result in "the break-up of Britain".

Moving to deflect attention from the dispute over VAT on fuel, ministers did their utmost to exploit Labour confusion over calls by Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, to move to a Scandinavian-style monarchy.

Mr Straw suggested in a BBC *Panorama* programme, broadcast last night, that the number of people entitled to be called His or Her Royal Highness should fall from the present 40 to 20, with only five or six being given duties.

The Labour leadership last night stood by Mr Straw but made clear that the party had no firm plans and there was no question of abolishing the monarchy. "There is no question of him being sacked," a source close to Tony Blair said.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, said the plans would result in "the break-up of Britain", while Stephen Dorrell, the National Heritage Secretary, attacked the proposals in the Commons, arguing that the monarchy was a vital part of constitutional stability.

"We deplore attempts by the party opposite to distort economic priorities to change the monarchy in a way that they find politically correct," he said. "Labour are the high priests of political correctness and they are seeking now to impose that straitjacket around the Royal Family."

Michael Portillo, the Employment Secretary, said the plans would lead to a "Queen on bicycle", and David Hunt, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, wrote to Mr Blair challenging him to "back or sack" Mr Straw.

The Labour leadership yesterday tried to play down any idea of a rift with Jack Straw, but Tony Blair declined to back him publicly. Several MPs also expressed private fears that Mr Straw had gone too far and deflected attention from Labour's own campaign on VAT.

Party sources made clear that Mr Straw was voicing his own opinions and that Labour was not in the business of "attacking the monarchy". However, they admitted that the future of the Royal Family might be discussed by a special commission on the constitution, co-chaired by Mr Straw, which is drawing up wider plans for next summer.

The commission, which is concentrating on constitutional reforms for the regions, has been reactivated since Mr Straw took on the Home Affairs portfolio. However, Labour officials indicated that it was highly unlikely that proposals to slim down the monarchy would go to next year's party conference.

Chris Smith, the Shadow National Heritage Secretary, said Mr Straw had gone further than existing Labour policy, while raising legitimate questions for debate.

VAT rebels, page 12
Scandinavian royals, page 18
Magnus Linklater, page 20



Virginia Bottomley, the Health Secretary, meets Dean Sullivan, who plays a drug addict in the soap opera *Brookside*, after the Turning Point annual conference. The charity helps people with drink and drug problems

School leagues to be extended

By John O'Leary, Education Editor

THE Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, yesterday committed the Government to publishing more sophisticated school league tables but ruled out any system that takes account of the social background of pupils.

The first official measures of improvement by schools may come in next year's tables. Mrs Shephard will consider the inclusion of a three-year rolling average of GCSE and A-level results.

But an 85-page report by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority suggests that an accurate picture of the "value added" by schools will not be available until 1999. By

then, the first group of 11-year-olds to sit national curriculum tests will have taken GCSE.

Commissioning further work from the authority, Mrs Shephard stipulated that the measures used must be "straightforward to calculate and intelligible to parents", and that they should be based on test and examination results alone.

The pioneers of "value added" tables used social indicators, such as the number of pupils entitled to free school meals, to make allowance for areas of deprivation.

However, the report by the authority says: "The crucial questions to ask about pupils'

and their education are not about what social class they come from, but rather whether their abilities and aptitudes are being recognised and encouraged."

Critics of school league tables have always argued that examination results alone are misleading because they take no account of a school's intake. But Mrs Shephard's predecessors were reluctant to make the tables more complicated. Kenneth Clarke, introducing the tables in 1991, accused his opponents of wanting the statistics "cooked" before parents saw them.

Leading article, page 21

Consultants reject executive's authority

By Jeremy Laurance, Health Services Correspondent

OPEN warfare between doctors and managers has broken out at a third NHS trust after consultants passed a vote of no confidence in the chief executive. Senior doctors at the Foundation NHS trust, which runs mental health services in Stafford, say they no longer have a "viable working relationship" with Michael Murray, the chief executive.

Similar disputes between doctors and managers at Brighton and Bradford led to the resignations of two chairmen and a chief executive.

In a statement last night, the consultants at Foundation list a catalogue of grievances over the way the trust has developed and say Mr Murray failed to consult them and fostered "inter-disciplinary rivalry rather than co-operation". It is signed by eight of the eleven consultants at the trust.

Colin Reid, director of corporate affairs, said the move had come as a surprise and it was unlikely that Mr Murray would resign. "There are 600 staff and this letter has been signed by eight consultants."

Young thieves 'killed' Alzheimer's victim

A pensioner suffering from Alzheimer's disease died after being tripped by four children who then ransacked his home, Birmingham Crown Court was told yesterday. The boys, one of whom was 11, were armed with an axe. They threatened Patrick Mitchell, 78, after offering to make him tea when they called at his home in Coventry in June 1993.

They tripped him, causing him to crack seven ribs, then stole two empty wallets and two packets of cigarettes, the prosecution said. Mr Mitchell died in hospital two weeks later from internal bleeding. It is alleged that his death was due to the injuries caused by the boys, now aged between 13 and 16. All four, who cannot be named for legal reasons, deny a charge of manslaughter. The trial continues today.

Father wins custody

A father whose ten-year court battle for custody of his son has cost more than £500,000 in public funds won the right to take the boy back to the United States yesterday. Mr Justice Johnson ruled that the boy, aged 13, who lives in north London, can go to Charlottesville, Virginia, at the end of the 1995 school year. The boy cannot be identified.

Rikki children cleared

The group of children seen with six-year-old Rikki Neave shortly before his murder have been interviewed by police and are not being treated as suspects. Two brothers and a sister told their mother that they had been playing with Rikki opposite his school in Peterborough on the evening of November 28. His body was found the next day.

Children's grim legacy

The lifelong psychological damage caused to children by domestic violence is being ignored, with at least 750,000 estimated to experience repeated violence between their parents each year, a report by NCH Action for Children claims today. Police and social workers regard it as a problem for the adults and do not consider the effects on children, it says.

Guns 'normal' on TV

Television companies are progressively making the use of firearms appear normal in Britain through the number of films and programmes in which they are seen, the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association said. A survey of 47 films on four channels showed 244 incidents involving firearms, 21 involving knives and 199 violent assaults.

Headmaster killed wife

A schoolmaster who stabbed his wife to death was sent to Rampton secure hospital yesterday. Frank Hampshire, 62, of Gantskill, northeast London, had suffered for years from a psychotic illness and had stopped taking his medication at the time he killed his wife, Catherine, the Old Bailey was told. He stabbed her repeatedly in the face and neck.

Lloyd Webber appeal

The composer Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber has appealed for privacy after being admitted to an unnamed hospital on Friday with a serious throat illness. In a statement he said he expected to be out by the end of the week. "I would be grateful if there could be no further press inquiries as I am told this is something only nature can heal," he said.

Theatre chief to leave

Richard Eyre is to step down as director of the Royal National Theatre in 1997 after nine years in the job. The decision was expected as he once said such a post should not be held longer than ten years. Contenders for his job include Nicholas Hytner, Stephen Daldry, artistic director of the Royal Court, Sir Ian McKellen and Kenneth Branagh.

Spring suspends talks with Fianna Fail

By Nicholas Watt, Ireland Correspondent

DICK SPRING, leader of the Irish Labour Party, suspended negotiations with Fianna Fail on renewing a coalition government yesterday after fresh allegations emerged in a dispute over a judicial appointment.

Mr Spring demanded clarification from Fianna Fail after *The Irish Times* claimed that Albert Reynolds had defended

Harry Whelehan, former President of the High Court, in Parliament after privately calling on him to resign. Mr Reynolds has since stood down as Prime Minister but Labour suspended the yesterday's talks on the grounds that other Fianna Fail Cabinet ministers would have known about the alleged call for Mr Whelehan to resign.

The disclosures came as Labour and Fianna Fail were on the verge of forming a new

government after the last coalition collapsed last month. Labour MPs were furious about the new allegations.

Jim Kemmy, chairman of the Labour Party, said: "We are concerned at this report and it is important that it should be cleared up immediately. It would be almost impossible for a new government to be formed with this hanging over it. The ball is in Fianna Fail's court."

Mr Spring and Bertie

Ahern, the new Fianna Fail leader, were due to meet last night to discuss their differences. The report in *The Irish Times* is the latest in a litany of claims over the conduct of Mr Whelehan's office when he was Attorney-General.

The coalition Government collapsed last month after Mr Reynolds appointed Mr Whelehan to the High Court despite Labour's anger over the delay in processing extradition warrants against

Father Brendan Smyth, a paedophile priest.

A spokesman for Mr Reynolds, who was in Budapest yesterday, described the report as inaccurate. He rejected allegations that other Fianna Fail ministers were aware of the demand for Mr Whelehan to resign.

Mr Ahern said last night that Labour's decision to suspend negotiations was a significant development and he promised an explanation.

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Harley St doctor's widow accused of cheating client

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A HARLEY Street doctor's wife went on a shopping spree with a credit card she stole while a wealthy author was having rejuvenation injections at her husband's clinic. Knightsbridge Crown Court was told yesterday.

Gilda Ratner, a 21-year-old former model, spent £1,470 at a Chelsea dress shop in one afternoon. Jeffrey Pegden, for the prosecution, said. One item — a beige suit by the designer Valentino — cost £525. She was said to have used an Access card that she took from the handbag of Eleanor Berry while she was being treated at the Preventive Medicine Clinic run by the late Dr Victor Ratner. After returning to Harley Street from Chelsea, she slipped the card back into Miss Berry's bag, Mr Pegden said.

Mrs Ratner, who married her husband in 1991 when she was 17, was also alleged to have defrauded Miss Berry — the daughter of Lord Hartwell, the former proprietor of *The Daily Telegraph* — out of almost £17,000 by forging cheques and theft.

Dr Ratner, whose clients included Princess Alexandra, the Duchess of Kent, Elizabeth Taylor and Sir David Frost, eventually confronted his wife about the missing cash, the court heard. Mr Pegden said that Mrs Ratner denied taking the money and blamed a

former housekeeper at the clinic. A few days later Dr Ratner died. Mrs Ratner, who lived above the clinic, denies nine counts of theft, handling stolen goods, obtaining goods by deception and forgery between January and September last year.

Miss Berry told the court that she went to Dr Ratner for "ozone" injections to boost her



Gilda Ratner: spent £525 on a Valentino suit

immunity system and for "rejuvenation". Her weekly treatment bill for two or three treatments was about £900.

Miss Berry was collaborating with Dr Ratner on a book about "ozone therapy" and he allowed her a £250 discount on her bill, she told the court. The injections not only delayed the body's ageing process but helped patients suffering from

cancer and Aids, she added. Miss Berry was described as a "prolific cheque writer" by Mr Pegden. Her cheques for treatment at the Preventive Medicine Clinic were handled by Dr Ratner's wife, who worked for him as a receptionist and financial controller.

Mr Pegden said that some of the cheques forged by Mrs Ratner were not accepted by the bank because the signatures appeared to be bogus. The defendant told Miss Berry and, without realising she was being defrauded, she wrote a "stinking letter" to her branch manager. She accused the bank of "being a bit of a pain" and admitted in the letter that she sometimes used three different signatures on her cheques. The letter ended: "Please don't put me through this hell again."

Mr Pegden said by sending the letter Miss Berry "unwittingly assisted with these cheques being debited to her account". Later, when she examined her bank statements, she realised she had been defrauded and went to the police.

Mr Pegden said that the doctor was "extremely unhappy" about what had been reported to him by Miss Berry. The confrontation came in August last year. Dr Ratner died, aged 61, on August 6 or August 7, counsel said. The trial continues.



Lindisfarne, who claim their classic hit "Fog on the Tyne" has been plagiarised

Lindisfarne claim pop hit looms out of their Fog

BY PAUL WILKINSON

THE 1970s folk-rock group Lindisfarne has accused the producers of the biggest selling pop record of the year of plagiarising their hit "Fog on the Tyne".

Whigfield, the Danish model-turned-singer, went straight to number one with the disco song "Saturday Night". But Lindisfarne alleges there are striking similarities between "Saturday Night" and "Fog on the Tyne". The band, which has not had a hit for years, would appreciate a share of the royalties if they can prove their case.

Last month Warner Chappell Music launched an action against Whigfield's MCA label, claiming the song is based on the first line of The Equals 1969 hit "Rub a Dub Dub". To add insult to injury, Whigfield's song was

voted the worst of the year by readers of *Smash Hits*.

Alan Hall, 49, a founder member of Lindisfarne, who still tours with band, said experts suggested the tunes were similar and that his publishers could have a case. "A DJ friend rang me and told me to have a listen to 'Saturday Night'. As soon as I heard the first few bars I was convinced it was a total rip-off of our tune."

"There are about eight notes in exactly the same place at exactly the same rhythm. At least ours was a good tune. Whigfield's is just caterwauling over a repetitive drumbeat."

Ray Laidlaw, 46, the drummer, said "I thought the Whigfield song was crap when I heard it but there are obvious similarities. Solicitors acting for Hit

and Run Music, Lindisfarne's publishers, have written to MCA informing them they will be taking court action. They are considering combining their claim with Warner Chappell's. MCA Publishers said they were unable to comment.

Lindisfarne are following a well-trodden path. A judge had to sit through dozens of renditions of "Oh Carolina" last month to decide who wrote the recent hit for the reggae singer Shaggy, and royalties on Kylie Minogue's "Confide in Me" have been frozen in a plagiarism dispute.

In 1971 George Harrison lost a small fortune when a court decided "My Sweet Lord" bore more than a passing resemblance to "He's So Fine" by the Chiffons.



Whigfield, who sings the hit "Saturday Night"

Club sues parents of dead skydiver

BY RICHARD DUCE

A PARACHUTE club yesterday launched a High Court damages claim against the parents of a skydiver who landed on its aeroplane as it taxied along the runway and was killed by the propeller blades.

The Headcorn Parachute Club in Kent is seeking compensation from the parents of Tatiana Pond, a 27-year-old barrister, claiming she was negligent in landing on top of the twin-engine plane from which she had earlier jumped, causing damage of £129,000.

The club's claim for damages is being countered by a

defence claim that the club was negligent in allowing the plane to use the runway while parachutists were still in the air.

Graham Dunning, for the club, which was owned by Miss Pond's fiancé, said she was one of ten free-fall parachutists who had jumped over Headcorn airfield, near Maidstone on March 11, 1989. He said that Miss Pond had been instructed to land in the "student" area, marked by a large white arrow, rather than on the main zone where the others dropped, but that witnesses would be called to say that after first heading towards the main zone, she then appeared to aim for the taxiway where the aircraft had landed.

Her feet went through the cockpit window, pushing it into the pilot's face. She then fell into the rotor blades of the port engine, "causing substantial damage", Mr Dunning said. The judge is to decide liability pending a possible further hearing to assess damages should Miss Pond be found negligent. The defence is being handled by lawyers instructed by insurers. The hearing continues.



Pond: died after landing on plane's propellers

Baby's nails 'pulled out by Guardsman'

A GUARDSMAN pulled two toenails from the foot of a 16-month-old child during a babysitting session, and possibly used pliers to do it, a court was told yesterday. Michael Pikesley, 25, was on Christmas leave last year when he agreed to look after the little boy while the child's mother was at work. Sarah Munro, for the prosecution, told Exeter Crown Court.

She said that medical evidence would suggest that an

instrument, possibly pliers, were used to inflict the "agonising" injuries. Pikesley, from Honiton, Devon, denies causing grievous bodily harm with intent, grievous bodily harm and causing actual bodily harm in the alleged incident on December 16, 1993.

Miss Munro said medical evidence showed that the injuries could not have been caused by the child knocking his foot, or anything falling on it. The trial continues.

Brother of Jersey couple's killer to keep legacy

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY

MARK NEWALL, who helped to bury the bodies of his wealthy parents after they were murdered by his brother Roderick, is to keep his share of their fortune.

Two relatives have withdrawn a civil action disinherit Mark, who is serving six years for helping to dispose of the remains, destroying evidence and giving the murderer an alibi. He helped Roderick to dig a 4ft grave in a remote field at Grève de Leq on the northwest coast of Jersey, where they buried Nicholas and Elizabeth Newall in October 1987.

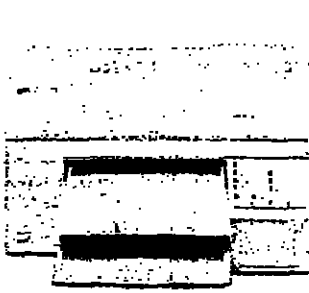
The brothers, who were the main beneficiaries of the will, shared £900,000 from their parents and an uncle who died six weeks later. But after they were sentenced in August this year, Nicholas Newall's twin, Stephen, and his wife's sister, Nan Clark, sought to replace them. The action was due to be heard next year.

Under Jersey law, a murderer cannot benefit from his crime. Roderick, a former Royal Green Jackets officer, issued a statement yesterday, saying that he did not wish to benefit from his parents' estate. Much of his inheritance was spent fighting extradition and for legal fees. He also bought a £180,000 yacht.

Mark, an international financier who was based in Paris, is understood to have invested his money and secreted millions of pounds around Europe. He described his relatives' attempts to deprive him of the inheritance as "greedy and distasteful".

Mrs Clark visited Roderick in prison last week and said she was satisfied that he regretted the killings.

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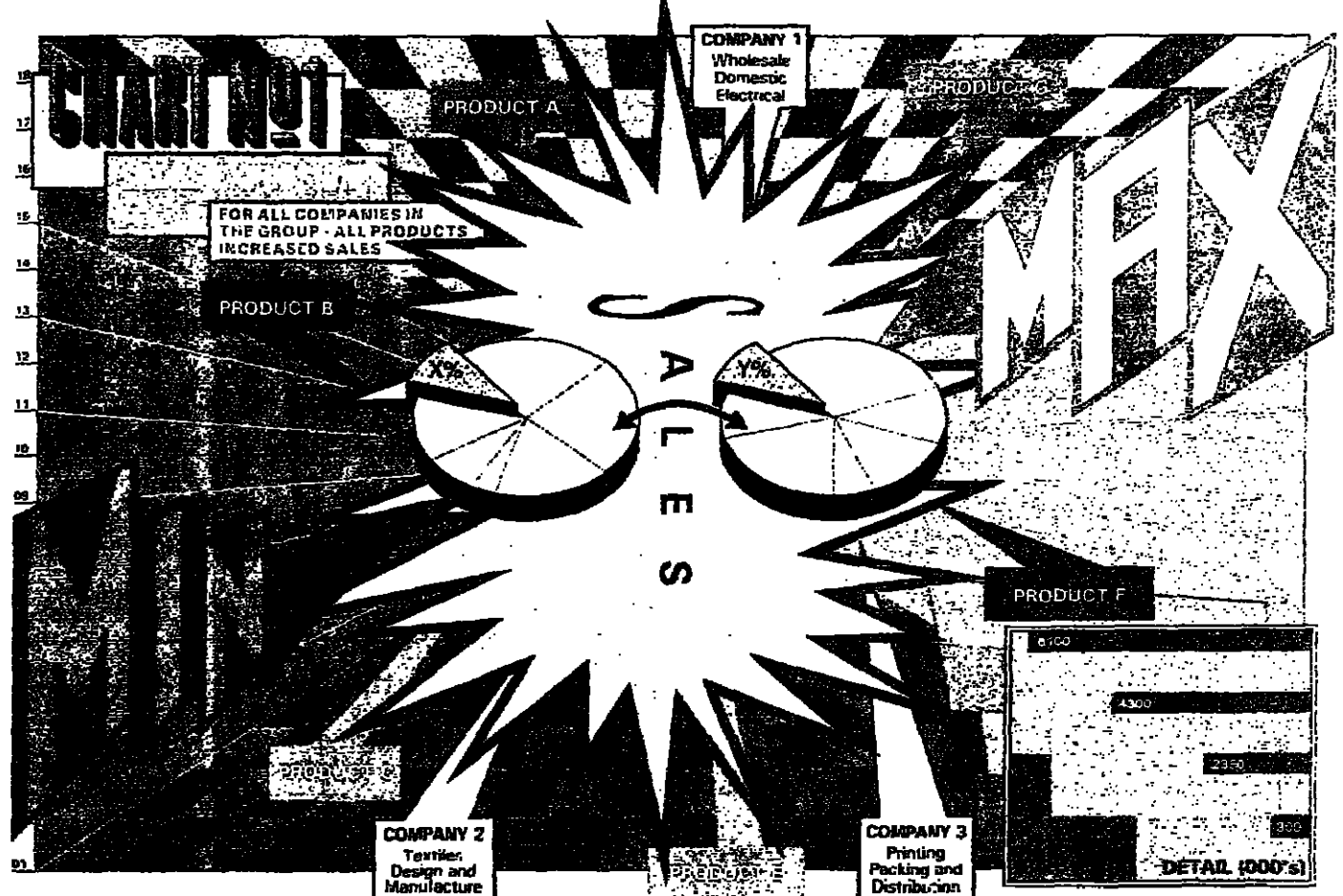
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HEWLETT-PACKARD



Motorist 'ran down and killed fleeing joyrider'

BY A STAFF REPORTER

AN ANGRY motorist ran down and killed a schoolboy "tearaway" who fled on foot after crashing into him in a stolen car, a court was told yesterday.

David Ayres, 46, a self-employed carpenter, was enraged after an estate car driven by David Dyson, 15, ploughed into his van in the village of Blaby, Leicestershire. Nottingham Crown Court was told.

John Snell, for the prosecution, said that David, of Leicester, had gone on a joyriding spree on the day of his death in September last year. Schoolfriends had spoken of him twice pulling up outside the school gates in another

stolen vehicle. "After the collision that little tearaway — and he really was a tearaway — drove away from the scene," Mr Snell said. But Mr Ayres was "in hot pursuit".

When the stolen Vauxhall Astra estate came to a halt, David Dyson leapt from behind the wheel and zig-zagged to avoid Mr Ayres, who was only inches away. "The boy was running as fast as he could."

Mr Snell said Mr Ayres deliberately mounted the kerb and a grass verge. Then, as the boy slipped on the wet surface, he was completely run over suffering massive internal injuries.

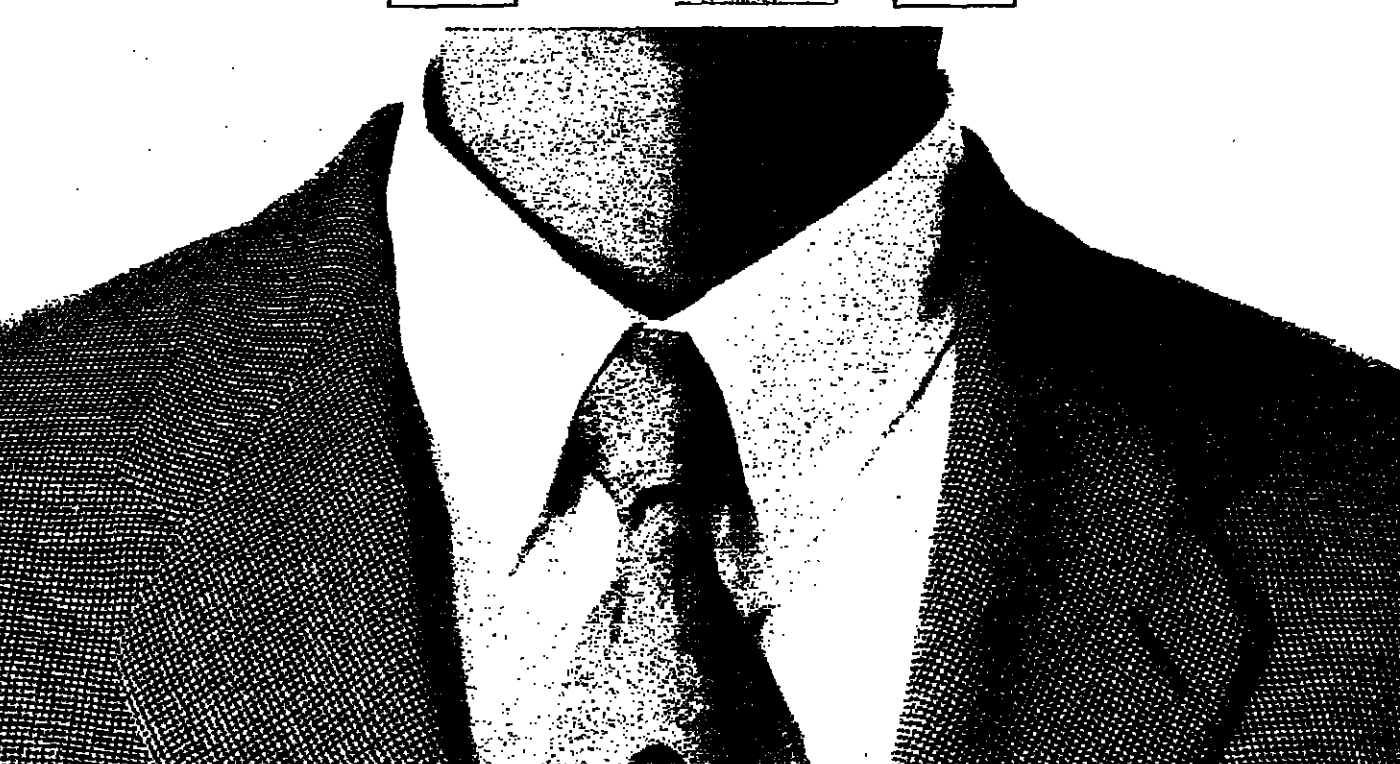
Mr Ayres, of Blaby, who

denies causing death by dangerous driving on September 21 last year, was then said to have jumped from his van after the boy regained his feet.

Mr Snell said Mr Ayres and a passer-by, a retired policeman, grabbed David's arms, unaware of his fatal injuries, as Mr Ayres was heard telling the dying boy: "You're nicked."

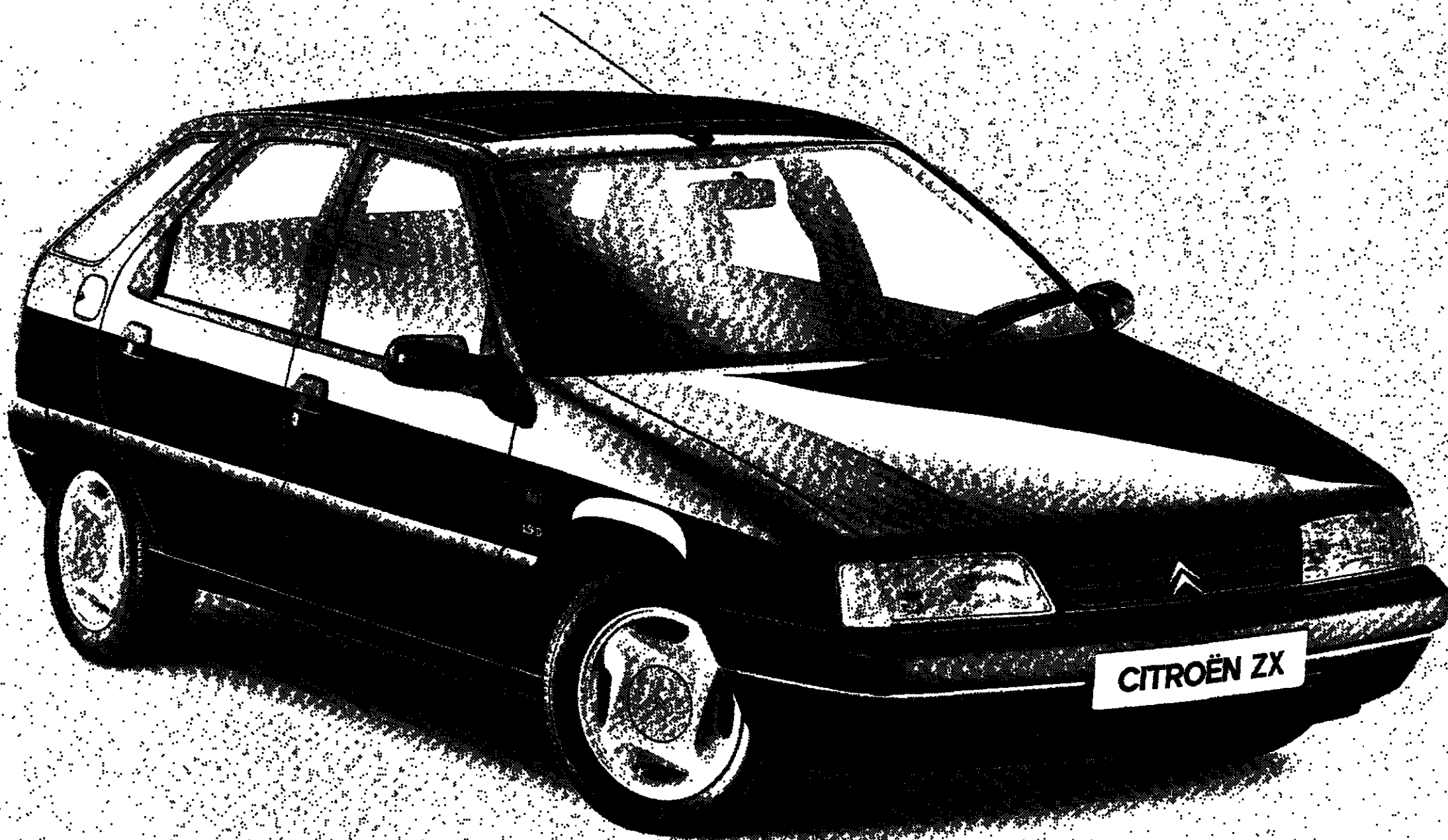
Witnesses later described how Mr Ayres travelled across the verge at an "unsafe speed". Mr Snell said: "This is a case where we see two wrongs did not make a right, a case where a young joyrider died. What the defendant did was sheer folly."

The hearing continues.





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Judge tells why shotgun pensioner had to pay

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

THE judge who ordered a pensioner to pay £4,000 damages to the burglar he shot on his allotment defended his decision yesterday and cautioned against people taking the law into their own hands.

In a letter to the editor of *The Times*, Mr Justice Rousier says that Ted Newbery, 82, planned to frighten the next intruder at his allotment shed by shooting blind through a hole in the door. The judge says that he is convinced that Mr Newbery, a former miner, was not in fear of his life and nor had there been any blood-curdling threats. He had not been too particular about what the shot would hit and when he did fire he caused "severe and lasting injury to the would-be burglar: a few inches either way and he would have killed him".

The judge described Mr Newbery as an "intrepid old gentleman, understandably exasperated by the recurrent attentions of vandals and thieves upon his allotment".

He suggested that Mr Newbery could have achieved his objective with another strategy. "Had the defendant (Mr Newbery) tried the less drastic tactic of shouting, turning on the outside light or even firing into the roof, it is virtually certain that the two burglars would have run away at once. Instead, he put into effect a plan made long before. To refer to him in these circumstances as the victim would not be everyone's choice," he writes.

In the letter Mr Justice Rousier criticises those who argue that an owner occupier is entitled to shoot a burglar and says they should ask themselves where such a principle would end.

"Is the farmer entitled to shoot with impunity the boy scrumping apples in his orchard? No? Then it must follow that somewhere a balance must be struck and I would suggest that the persons best placed to strike it are those who actually heard and saw the evidence rather than the various persons who have felt free to comment without having that advantage."

Speaking to *The Times* yesterday, the judge disclosed that he had received hate mail since media coverage highlighted the case in which he ordered Mr Newbery, of Ilkeston, Derbyshire, to pay damages to Mark Revill. Mr Newbery was cleared at Derby Crown Court last week of deliberately injuring Mr Revill, 28, after he told the

court he had fired the shot as a warning because he feared for his safety.

The judge said he had taken the unusual step of defending his decision in the media because the matter had become extremely distorted in the public mind. "I remain pretty convinced that the picture of this old boy cowering in terror is an inaccurate one. He had determined that the next person who tried to break in, he would fire that thing out of the door and that is what he did," Mr Justice Rousier told *The Times*.

"There has to be a balance. If you allow this sort of thing it ends up like that young man in America, who lost his way and was shot when he went to someone's door. That is what happens when you let people take the law into their own hands."

Mr Justice Rousier says in



Mr Justice Rousier has received hate mail

his letter that at the outset of the trial he was told that the defendant was covered in respect of damages and costs by a policy of insurance, provided his conduct was not found to be negligent.

An appeal to raise cash for Mr Newbery has raised more than £5,000. The appeal was launched by the local mayor, who said yesterday that donations had already exceeded the compensation order.

Tim Moloney, mayor of Erewash, who contributed the first £100, said: "When I started it I expected it just to stay in Ilkeston because I know the people in Ilkeston support Ted Newbery."

He said donations had come from as far away as Saudi Arabia and were still flooding in from across the country. "Lots of people have been touched. It's obviously struck a chord somewhere," Mr Moloney said.

Survivors say ship's crew out to save themselves

By Sam Kiley

FIVE hundred survivors from the liner *Achille Lauro*, including 66 Britons, finally reached dry land in Mombasa yesterday — in high spirits despite their five-day ordeal at sea.

Some of the passengers, aged into their 80s, sang rousing songs as they walked down gangways to be taken by bus to beachside hotels in the Kenyan resort.

But for Lorraine and Tony Webb, the relief was tinged with bitterness. The couple, originally from Cumbria but now living in South Africa, were travelling with their son Michael, 2, the youngest of the 1,000 survivors. They claim the officers and crew of the ill-starred ship had let them down.

Mr Webb, 44, said: "There is a sense of disappointment at the way the crew and officers behaved. This was not a case of women and children first. They were out to save themselves and not interested in looking after us. Sailors pushed past us in the queues to the lifeboats while the passengers made way for our son," he claimed.

"Boat boat," was Michael's only comment yesterday as the family looked over the prow of the *Spirit*, the Russian tanker which plucked them from the Indian Ocean last Wednesday. "I never



Tony and Lorraine Webb, with their son Michael, after reaching safety in Mombasa yesterday

want to see another one," Mrs Webb, 42, said.

When they fled from their cabin last Wednesday, the family had only basic clothing with them. Others on the *Spirit* were less well attired and many elderly men and women had to improvise to cover their bodies: a Dutch woman was dressed in a top made from the legs of her husband's trousers and a

skirt of sail cloth. Michael's nappies were sheets.

Though hanned from going below decks after the fire broke out on the liner, Mrs Webb sneaked back to her cabin to fetch fruit and water for Michael. On her way out she was engulfed in acrid smoke, and found herself trapped behind fire doors. Others, mainly elderly, were also trapped in

smoke-filled corridors but were released after banging on portholes. The evacuation was organised mainly by staff from the South African tour operator Starlight, rather than crew.

The Webbs suspected that the ship was in serious trouble in spite of assurances to the contrary from crew members. Israeli security agents on board warned them that

efforts to put out the fires were failing. Crewmen, unable to use fire hoses because of an explosion below decks, threw buckets of water down the ship's flaming stacks. Yesterday Captain Giuseppe Orsi, the skipper, said that buckets had been used to occupy staff and passengers to prevent panic.

Crew accused, page 1

Why women turn to THE TIMES

"I am particularly pleased with *The Times*' sports coverage"

Cecile Barnett, 54, office manager



"I enjoy the new *Times Sport* on Mondays, sports coverage has now become very wide-ranging. The paper is well laid out and presented and I like the Arts section which provides stimulating reviews of opera and theatre"

More women are reading *The Times*. This year, female readership increased by 31 per cent, and readership among the over-45s by 49 per cent. The largest gains for any national daily or Sunday newspaper.

Pregnancy payout cut by £100,000

By a Staff Reporter

A CAREER officer forced to quit the Army after she became pregnant has agreed an out-of-court settlement worth almost £100,000 less than the award she won at a tribunal.

A ministry appeal against the industrial tribunal ruling in favour of Helen Home-wood, 44, lapsed yesterday after both sides reached an agreement over the weekend. It is believed she settled for about £205,000.

The appeal was launched after a tribunal in Glasgow ruled that Mrs Home-wood had been discriminated against and put a figure of £299,851 on her lost career, before pension loss. The hearing was told that Mrs Home-wood, who joined up in 1972, married in 1980 and became pregnant the following year, was "an exceptional officer who could have expected to become a colonel by the turn of the century".

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THE TIMES TUE

Coro hunte

THE Ministry of Defence was warned by a doctor yesterday that it cannot permit amateur aircraft archaeologists from exhuming the bones of missing Second World War aircrew from wrecks.

Brian Smith, coroner for Ashford and Shepway, told request into the deaths of Battle of Britain pilots that would give permission to exhumations provided a dead airman's relatives wanted the remains recovered. He said it was for coroners' grant exhumation fees where bodies were found on public land and the Ministry had no jurisdiction.

Mr Smith's guidance was welcomed by Mark Kirby, 25-year-old aircraft archaeologist who was pronounced dead after crashing in 1940. Kirby's body was found in 1984 in a field near to the crash site. Kirby's family had been searching for his remains since his death.

The Ministry of Defence was warned by a doctor yesterday that it cannot permit amateur aircraft archaeologists from exhuming the bones of missing Second World War aircrew from wrecks. Brian Smith, coroner for Ashford and Shepway, told request into the deaths of Battle of Britain pilots that would give permission to exhumations provided a dead airman's relatives wanted the remains recovered. He said it was for coroners' grant exhumation fees where bodies were found on public land and the Ministry had no jurisdiction. Mr Smith's guidance was welcomed by Mark Kirby, 25-year-old aircraft archaeologist who was pronounced dead after crashing in 1940. Kirby's body was found in 1984 in a field near to the crash site. Kirby's family had been searching for his remains since his death.

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Coroner backs war relic hunter over Spitfire body

BY A STAFF REPORTER

THE Ministry of Defence was warned by a coroner yesterday that it cannot prevent amateur aircraft archaeologists from exhuming the bodies of missing Second World War aircrew from wrecked aircraft.

Brian Smith, coroner for Ashford and Shepway, told an inquest into the death of a Battle of Britain pilot that he would give permission for exhumations provided the dead airman's relatives wanted the remains recovered. He said it was for coroners to grant exhumation licences where bodies were found on public land and the Ministry had no jurisdiction.

Mr Smith's guidance was welcomed by Mark Kirby, a 25-year-old aircraft enthusiast who was prosecuted after recovering the remains of Sergeant John Gilders. The pilot died in February 1941, at the age of 21, when his Spitfire plunged into a field near Chilham, Kent. Mr Kirby and other war relic hunters recovered his remains in April at the request of his family.

Mr Kirby said: "We had no

idea we should approach the coroner. The Ministry of Defence always said it was up to them to grant licences which they wouldn't do if there were remains or the likelihood of explosives at the scene." The coroner explained that he had served in the RAF in II Group (fighter command), the same group as Sgt Gilders. He said: "I felt it appropriate to honour him, I can claim some small appreciation having served in the group myself."

He found that Sergeant



Sergeant Gilders went into a fatal nosedive

Gilders had died on war service. He will be buried at Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey with full military honours. Sergeant Gilders's brother Geoffrey is in Holland with his Dutch-born wife Volly. They did not attend yesterday's hearing.

A handful of the pilot's belongings were recovered including his pipe, a tobacco pouch and the remains of a wallet containing part of his RAF pay book. The inquest was told.

There were also fragments of a leather glove, part of a flying helmet and charred bones which still smelt of petroleum. Dr Noel Padley, a pathologist, said in a statement. He was unable to give a cause of death but was clear that he had been dealing with the body of a military pilot and remains of an aircraft from the period around 1941.

Andrew Saunders, from Tangmere Aviation Museum, Sussex, said he had contacted other pilots who were flying with Sergeant Gilders the day he died. He said that one pilot described how the Spitfire was

flying at 20,000 feet when it "appeared to go into an ever-increasing dive". The cause of the spin was put down to oxygen failure at high altitude which had made the pilot unconscious. The RAF had confirmed that the aircraft exploded on impact and said the engine sank 16ft into mud and water.

Mr Kirby had the case against him dismissed. He said: "A group of us carry out these excavations at our own expense. We are in contact with another three families who want their loved ones recovered to give them a proper funeral. We will carry on recovering these aircraft but we will take notice of what the coroner said. We always treat remains with respect. We understand how relatives can feel and wouldn't dream of upsetting them in any way. I'm just glad Sergeant Gilders will get a proper funeral and I shall attend when it happens."

The pilot's name is recorded on a Commonwealth memorial at Runnymede with thousands of other airmen killed in the war.

Night-flight protesters take case to High Court

BY NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

RESIDENTS from around Heathrow airport gathered outside the High Court in their pyjamas yesterday to protest at noise from planes landing and taking off during the night.

Ian Swankie from Richmond upon Thames, said: "These are ordinary citizens who represent half a million people who live under the Heathrow flight path. They are fed up with their sleep being disturbed by jets flying over their homes as early as 4am each day."

Five councils have taken their residents' challenge to court. They claim that the Government acted illegally in allowing more night flights. Richard Gordon, QC, for the consortium, argued that John MacGregor, a former Transport Secretary, had misused powers under the 1982 Civil Aviation Act "in the interests of commerce".



A pyjama-clad protester outside court yesterday

Masons vote to cut link with hospital

BY ANDREW PIERCE

FREEMASONS voted overwhelmingly yesterday to sever a 60-year-old link with the Royal Masonic Hospital in west London.

The vote, at a meeting at Wembley Conference Centre, came after years of internal wrangling that led to the resignation from the board of the Duke of Kent and Prince Michael. The 200-bedroom hospital, which was opened by George V in 1933, will be put up for sale for up to £20 million.

More than 76,000 votes were cast in favour of selling with 1,800 against. Most of the votes were cast in a postal ballot. A last attempt will be launched in the High Court next week to block the sale when a small band of Masons opposed to severing links with the hospital will appeal for the Attorney-General to intervene.

The hospital has lost £9 million in five years. It was set up as a charity to provide medical care for Masons. In recent times only half the beds were occupied at any one time and less than a fifth by Masons.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

Dealer East

North-South game. IMPs

♠ K 7 5
♥ Q 3 2
♦ K Q 10
♣ Q J 10 5

♠ A Q J 10 4 3
♥ J 10 8 6 5
♦ 8 2
♣ —

♠ A 7 4
♥ A 9 7 8 4 3
♦ A K 6 2

W

N

E

S

46
Pass
All pass

Dole (1)
5+

Pass
Pass
Pass

14
4NT (2)
6+

Opening lead: ♠J

By ROBERT SHEEHAN
BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

(1) In teams, doubles over high-level intervention are described as "card showing". If North holds say K 9 8 7 6 of spades and an ace, he has to pass and hope his partner can re-open with a double.

(2) South had high hopes of slam but was afraid that his partner might think he had two five-card suits if he rebid Five Clubs. He bid 4NT, which in this type of auction is used to suggest he has another suit, but that his diamond suit was significantly longer.

Six Clubs is by far the better slam — against a 3-2 or 4-1 club break South can arrange to ruff a spade in hand, thus taking one spade ruff, the ace of hearts, six diamond tricks in hand and four club tricks in dummy, and with a favourable diamond distribution thirteen tricks can be made even against a 4-1 club break. However, on this occasion the

bad trump break beats the club slam.

Six Diamonds requires some elimination technique. As in the last resort South will have to lead towards the queen of hearts for his twelfth trick, it does no harm to get rid of the spades first. Declarer wins the ace of hearts, and king-queen of diamonds. He ruffs a spade and uses the two club entries to dummy to ruff two more spades.

After all the clubs have been played off he plays a heart towards the queen. When East wins with the king he only has black cards left and has to concede a ruff and discard.

Macallan results

The first round of this year's Macallan Camrose series (the home international tournament) was played over the weekend. In Exeter, England beat Wales by 63. Victory Points to 21. In Perth, Northern Ireland beat Scotland 46-44. The next round is on January 21-22.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Flying Dutchmen

After four rounds of the chess olympiad in Moscow the lead is shared on 13 points out of 16 by Holland and the Russian 'B' team. Lithuania are in third place with 12.5. England are languishing with 9.5. The weak link in the English side in their fourth-round match again proved to be the London grandmaster Dr John Nunn, who lost his game against Siru of Indonesia on board three.

In the parallel women's event Hungary and Georgia lead jointly with 10.5 points out of 12.

In round four the English women's team lost by the score of 2-1 to Russia 'B' but Harriet Hunt distinguished herself in this match by winning her individual game against Strutinskaia.

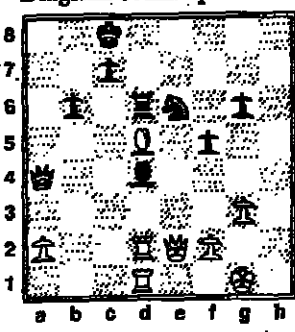
Polgar wins

Judit Polgar, the Hungarian teenager, has established a record by becoming the first girl to play on board one for a top team in the 'men's olympiad'. In the course of her debut she won the following fascinating clash against the Greek grandmaster Spiridon Skembris.

White: Judit Polgar
Black: Spiridon Skembris
Moscow olympiad 1994
Petroff Defence

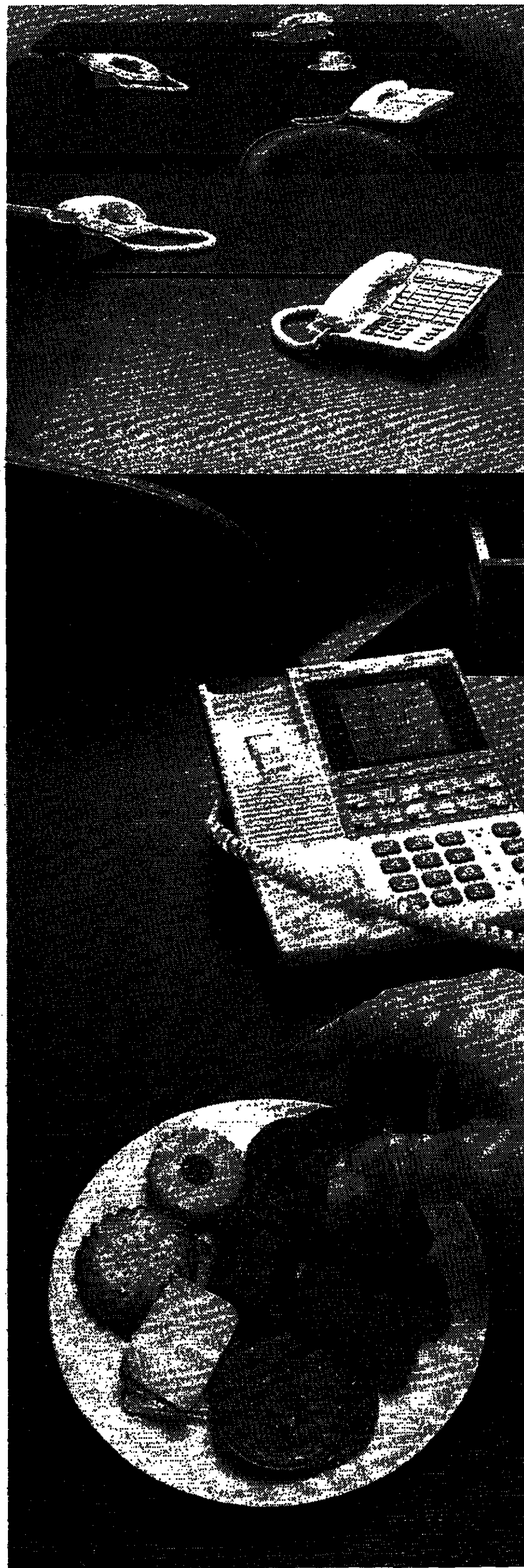
1	e4	e5
2	Nf3	Nf6
3	d4	Nxe4
4	Bd3	d5
5	Nxe5	Nd7
6	Ncd7	Bxd7
7	O-O	Qh4
8	c4	O-O-O
9	c5	g6
10	Nc3	Bg7
11	Bc3	Nc5
12	Q3	Qh3
13	Be2	h5
14	Ncd5	Ba4
15	b3	Rxd5
16	bxa4	Rhd8
17	Bf3	Rxd4
18	Qc2	b5
19	Bd4	Bd4
20	Rd1	h4
21	Bg2	Qd7
22	Qe2	h3g3
23	h3g3	f5
24	as-	Qa4
25	axb6	axb6
26	Rf1	Rd6
27	Bf3	Rd8
28	Rd2	Rd6
29	Rcd1	Ne8
30	Bc5	Black resigns

Diagram of final position



After 30 ... Rxd5 31 Qxe6+
White wins easily.

Winning Move, page 48



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By A STAFF REPORTER

By ANJANA ANTHIA

Maureen and Alan Patworth could not use their bath for two years until given help by the Red Cross loan service.

Some of the 900 loan depots around the country

The service is free. Some branches ask for a small deposit, although people who cannot afford it are never turned away. Equipment needs to be maintained and replaced regularly. With further donations, the Red Cross could supply many more people with this type of help.

☐ Tick this box if you would like a receipt.

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

BY BILL FROST

BY A STAFF REPORTER

His 40-year-old mother said: "He is incredibly brave but obviously he can never have a normal childhood. We are convinced Benlate was responsible for his condition and we are determined to get it taken off the market."

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

The study comes as latest figures show that 15 per cent of births in Britain are Caesarean, a rise of 2 percentage points in a year and four times higher than the rate 20 years ago. Experts say that the threat of legal action if some-

Operations carry the small risk of thrombosis and there is some evidence that babies delivered this way can suffer breathing problems. Women should be able to have continuous support in labour from a midwife they trust and have proper advice about relax-

A spokesman for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in London said it was possible hospitals with hi-tech equipment could be carrying out more Caesareans, but some women preferred them.

Dr Stuttaford, page 19

BY NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

Glaxo, the pharmaceutical company, has promised £10 million to build the Edward Jenner Institute for Vaccine Research, named after the doctor who pioneered research into immunisation. The company will also pay half the running costs for the first ten years, which are expected to amount to £53 million.

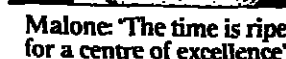
The main aims of the new institute, which will be based on the site of the Biotechnology council's Institute for Animal Health, are to improve understanding of the immune response to disease to provide better models for

Gerald Malone, the Health Minister, said at the launch of the institute yesterday that a top priority would be to tackle the emergence of drug-resistant diseases. "The fear has grown that British companies are falling behind their international competitors in vaccine research," he said.

"The time is now ripe for a British vaccine research centre of excellence. British researchers will soon pioneer new approaches to deliver better vaccines in the war against worldwide

David Hunt, the Public Services and Science Minister, said: "This institute is an example of just this kind of partnership in action.

body's natural defences against disease work. The launch of the institute is good news for science; it is good news for everyone involved in public health; and it is good news for people all over the world."



Malone: 'The time is ripe for a centre of excellence'

A Royal Bank of Scotland Company

A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH INSURERS AND OF THE INSURANCE OMBUDSMAN BUREAU. NOT AVAILABLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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'We should have warned the residents, then they could have come out to watch the show'

RAF buzzed phone kiosk in 500mph low-level raid

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE Ministry of Defence has given an apology to a tiny hamlet whose red telephone box was used as target practice for Tornado aircraft in an RAF exercise.

Residents ran from their homes in fear as the bombers flew over Gollingth Foot in the Yorkshire Dales one morning last July and a farmer claimed his mare died from fright. In the afternoon the aircraft returned from their German base for a repeat attack. Each time five of the 20-tonne planes swept low over the box at more than 500mph. Angry residents claimed the Tornados were well below the 250ft minimum set by the RAF for the missions regularly flown over North Yorkshire.

Robert Davy, 65, of Gollingth Farm, yesterday said: "It was a very frightening

thing. Thank God it was only a dummy run. The noise was tremendous and it sent the animals wild. When I looked from my window the jets screamed in over the phone box, which is 40ft lower than my house and right in line with it."

Immediately after the exercise he sent a protest letter to Malcolm Rifkind, the Defence Secretary. He is also seeking compensation for the death of his 21-year-old mare, Lucky, which died within days of the exercise.

Mr Davy said local people were used to jets in the area but the mock raid on the phone box was the first of its kind. "I'm sure they could have mocked up a similar situation on MoD land miles from anywhere using an old box. Instead they terrorise people and animals without a thought for our safety."

"When I asked the RAF why we were not notified I was told it was impossible to contact everyone due to the number of practice flights up and down the country." MoD officials had earlier spent a day in Gollingth Foot, near Masham, on reconnaissance for the navigational exercise.

Initially the RAF dismissed as ridiculous suggestions that



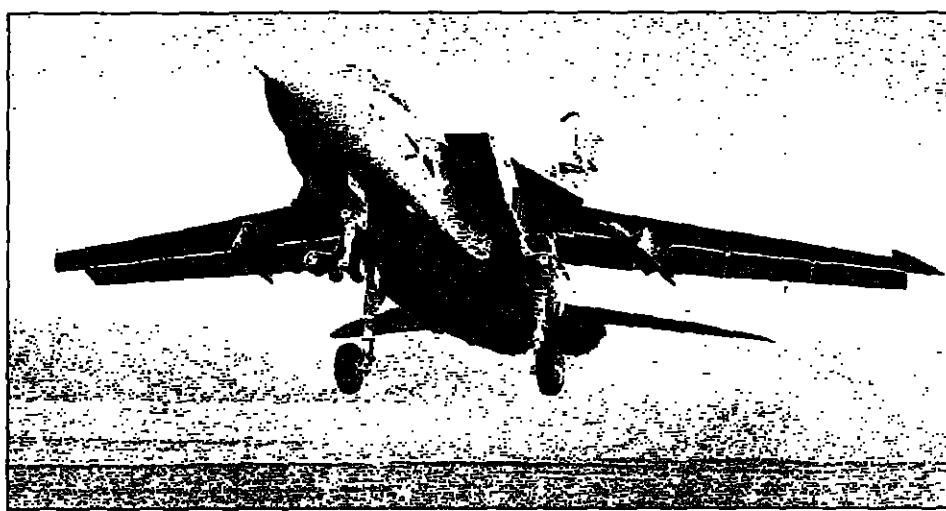
Robert Davy at the telephone box that was the target of an RAF exercise. The 20-tonne aircraft, below, had flown 400 miles from Germany

the kiosk was a target, but later personnel of 31 Squadron, some of them Gulf War veterans, admitted they had had it in their sights. The RAF, which had claimed 10 "hits" on the box, apologised to the occupants of the six homes in the hamlet. In a letter to Mr Davy, the MoD said: "We believe that the choice of target on this particular occasion was injudicious and as a result of what happened we are reviewing our guidance to air crews."

An RAF spokesman at the MoD in Whitehall said yesterday: "We should have done the neighbourly thing and called on the residents to tell them

what was happening, then they could have come outside and watched the show. We accept these aircraft are very frightening in a warlike situation. There was no danger. The aircraft were not carrying bombs, not even practice ones."

He said that boxes were often used as targets. "They are just the right size for the sort of thing pilots and navigators might be asked to attack in real life, like a mortar position or a piece of artillery." BT was "concerned" about phone boxes being used as targets. "It's a new one on us: perhaps they were working for the opposition."



British effort aims to top restoration of Dresden church

By ALAN HAMILTON

BRITISH money is to help restore one of the greatest monuments destroyed by Allied bombing during the Second World War.

For nearly 50 years the 18th-century Frauenkirche, one of the finest baroque churches in Europe, has lain as a pile of blackened rubble in the centre of Dresden in eastern Germany, victim of a terrible raid in February 1945 that still inhabits one of the darker corners

of the history of the war. A British group headed by Lord Menzies and the Rt Rev Simon Barrington-Ward, Bishop of Coventry, aims to raise up to £250,000 to replace the 30ft gold orb and cross that surmounted a great stone dome.

Peter Nardini, a London architect from the University of the South Bank, travels to Dresden next week in search of the original drawings of the cross so that a copy can be made in Britain.

Dresden was a centre of music

and has associations with composers from Bach to Shostakovich. The British group, established as the Dresden Trust, plans to raise funds with a series of concerts, including one in Coventry Cathedral and another in Cambridge on the anniversary of the raid next February.

The trust is launching an educational programme in schools and mounting a travelling exhibition on the restoration, which will visit London and Edinburgh next summer. Dr Alan Russell, chairman of

the trust and a retired European Commission official, said the group wanted a memorial to the victims of the bombing rather than the bomb or cross. The trust wanted to avoid the controversy that surrounded the unveiling of a statue to Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris, architect of the Dresden raid.

Work began this summer on clearing rubble from the crypt of the Frauenkirche and identifying the sandstone blocks of the church's ornate facade. The project is expected

to take nine years and cost £100 million, most of it funded from German sources.

Throughout the life of the East German state the church lay untouched by a regime with no interest in restoring religious buildings, while a rash of communist architecture grew up around it. The East Germans preferred to restore the city's opera house, reopened on the fortieth anniversary of the raid. Some Dresdners wanted the church left as a memorial to the war

but the view has prevailed that it should be restored.

The Dresden raid — in which 786 RAF bombers dropped 2,647 tons of bombs on a city of little strategic or military significance, killing upwards of 30,000 civilians in a single night — has come to be seen as an act of needless slaughter. Even Churchill was moved to condemn "mere acts of terror and wanton destruction, however impressive".

Restoring Reichstag, page 13

Brontë protest halts wind project

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to stop wind turbines being built in the heart of Brontë country have won their first significant victory (Paul Wilkinson writes).

A planning inspector has rejected an appeal for two machines the height of Nelson's Column on moorland above Haworth in West York-

shire. Protesters against the turbines included Sir Bernard Ingham, former press secretary to Baroness Thatcher, the singer Cliff Richard and the actress Emma Thompson.

The appeal was one of three held in September into the refusal by Bradford Council for six turbines at sites close to the village. Jack Womersley,

chairman of the council's planning policy committee, said: "We must not get the flags out too quickly as there are still two other appeals pending. It does show that we were right to take into account the historical and visual impact these turbines can have. Tourism is an important part of the local economy."



Joan Elliot: centre to be named after her

Heiress leaves £2.5m to wildlife

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
COUNTRYSIDE
CORRESPONDENT

AN HEIRESS who died three months ago instructed that the bulk of her £2.5 million estate be used to protect animals and the countryside.

The Essex Wildlife Trust, the beneficiary, said yesterday that the money would be spent on the creation of a nature reserve and conservation centre named after her. Joan Elliot, the last family member of an engineering firm in Braintree, Essex, left £2.54 million, all of it to the trust apart from £71,000, her car and a life interest in a property in the town. Miss Elliot lived a simple life in a modern, four-bedroom house. Her main companion was a housekeeper who lived near by.

John Hall, the trust's director, said: "It is by far the biggest bequest we have had since we were founded in 1959. Much of the estate is tied up in property or land, so it could be some years before the cash becomes available. We would like to buy between 500 and 600 acres, possibly a farm and preferably in the Braintree area, which could be managed for the benefit of wildlife."

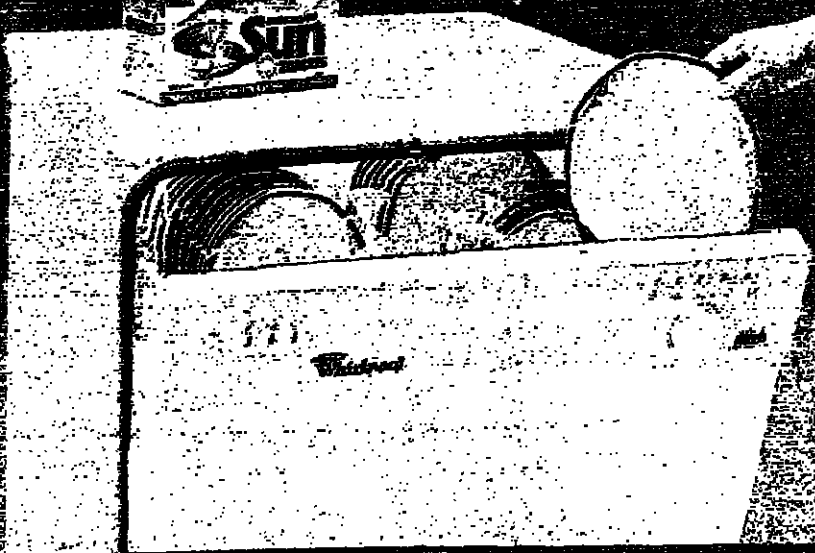
The trust manages 83 nature reserves covering 5,500 acres, including marshes, hay meadows, ancient woodland, heathland and shingle banks along the coast. Miss Elliot, who died in September aged 86, had been a subscriber to the trust, which has 13,500 members, for many years.

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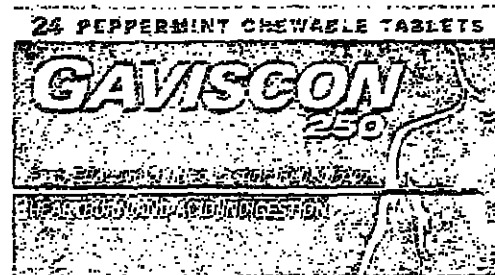
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THE TIMES TUESDAY DECEMBER 6 1994

Judicial review

Civil service lesson on court challenge

By FRANCES GIBB

SEVEN thousand civil servants have been told to take a lesson in the importance of legal advice from the Home Office. The message was delivered by the Home Office's legal adviser, Sir John Gifford, in a letter to all civil servants on December 1st. The letter was published in the Home Office's internal newsletter, *Home Office News*, and was also sent to all civil servants by email. Sir John's letter was a response to a series of court challenges to the Home Office's policy on the use of force by police officers. The letter stated that the Home Office was committed to ensuring that its policies were lawful and that it was taking steps to ensure that its policies were consistent with the law. Sir John also stated that the Home Office was committed to ensuring that its policies were transparent and that it was taking steps to ensure that its policies were accessible to all civil servants.



Howard

Council ignores stolen cheque fraud for a year

By IAN MURRAY, COMMUNITIES EDITOR

A FRAUD involving £10,000 of local authority money was discovered after a year but not investigated for nearly a year. A cheque for £10,000 was stolen in March 1993 and the amount claimed in the local authority's accounts. Although the money was never picked up, the fraudster had been identified by the time the fraud was discovered. The local authority's fraud investigation team was set up in 1993 and has since been successful in recovering several hundred thousand pounds. The team has also been successful in identifying and recovering several hundred thousand pounds of stolen money. The team has also been successful in identifying and recovering several hundred thousand pounds of stolen money. The team has also been successful in identifying and recovering several hundred thousand pounds of stolen money.

Polystyrene turns into tropical weather

By NICK NUTTALL

POLYSTYRENE is the material used to make tropical weathering products and it is now being used to make tropical weathering products. The material is used to make tropical weathering products and it is now being used to make tropical weathering products. The material is used to make tropical weathering products and it is now being used to make tropical weathering products. The material is used to make tropical weathering products and it is now being used to make tropical weathering products. The material is used to make tropical weathering products and it is now being used to make tropical weathering products.



Well, I'm giving everyone shirts all beautifully wrapped at Thom...

Judicial review at record level

Civil servants given lesson on avoiding court challenges

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

SIXTEEN thousand government officials have been issued with a guide on how to cope in the face of a record number of legal challenges to their decisions by the public.

Judge over your shoulder. published in the summer and now on its fourth print run, warns civil servants that their decisions are constantly under scrutiny. Its aim is to prompt "warning bells to ring", so they take timely legal advice.

There have been nearly 3,000 judicial review challenges this year, compared with 525 in 1980, and extra judges have had to be appointed to reduce the backlog.

Government ministers have recently been the subject of three court rulings that they acted unlawfully. Michael Howard, Home Secretary, was found to have acted unlawfully in going ahead with his new criminal injuries



Howard: criticised in two recent reviews

Council ignored stolen cheque fraud for a year

By IAN MURRAY, COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

A FRAUD involving £250,000 of local authority money was discovered within two days but not investigated for nearly a year.

A cheque for £43.13 was stolen in transit, the payee's name was amended and the amount altered to £250,243.13. Although the council's computer picked up the difference almost immediately, the fraudster had long gone by the time an inquiry started, the Audit Commission reports today. The money has not been recovered.

In all, 83,000 cases of local authority fraud with losses totalling £34 million were uncovered in the last financial year compared with 54,000 cases costing £25 million the previous year.

The commission believes the higher figure is a result of better detection methods rather than because of a marked increase in fraud. "When authorities get organised to look for fraud, it is there to be found," according to Steve Nickless, a commission director.

Most fraud is carried out by people abusing the various

claimant systems. The bulk of last year's detected fraud involved 81,000 people cheating the benefits system of £26 million. A typical individual fraud involves £320 and on average local authorities recover 60 per cent. Local government staff were implicated in 235 of the benefit fraud cases, worth a total of £978,000. The biggest fraud growth involved student grants, with individuals claiming maintenance from several boroughs. There were 922 cases compared with 228 a year earlier, while the amount involved increased tenfold to £2.3 million.

Another growth area is in renovation grants, where cases increased in value from £450,000 to £1.1 million. Typical frauds included work being done at a lower cost than that approved by the authorities and contractors claiming for work not done. Some grant officers gave preferential treatment to friends and relatives.

Protecting the Public Purse: Ensuring Probity in Local Government (Stationery Office, £5)

by Fred Croft, a lawyer in the Treasury Solicitors' Department. The original version was widely criticised and senior judges and academics described its approach as "what can I get away with?" The latest edition, however, says "there are no shortcuts or magic formulae to evade the court's supervision, and to attempt to give any would not be in the spirit of the principles of good administration".

The judge is there to "ensure those affected by your decisions are treated fairly", it says, and "the best way of avoiding judicial review is to follow the principles of good administration".

The Home Office faces the most judicial review challenges, mainly over immigration and housing decisions. David Hogg, Deputy Treasury Solicitor, told the recent Law Society conference that the department had faced 750 judicial review challenges in 1993, 500 of which concerned immigration. So far this year the total is just over 900 cases, of which 700 concern immigration.

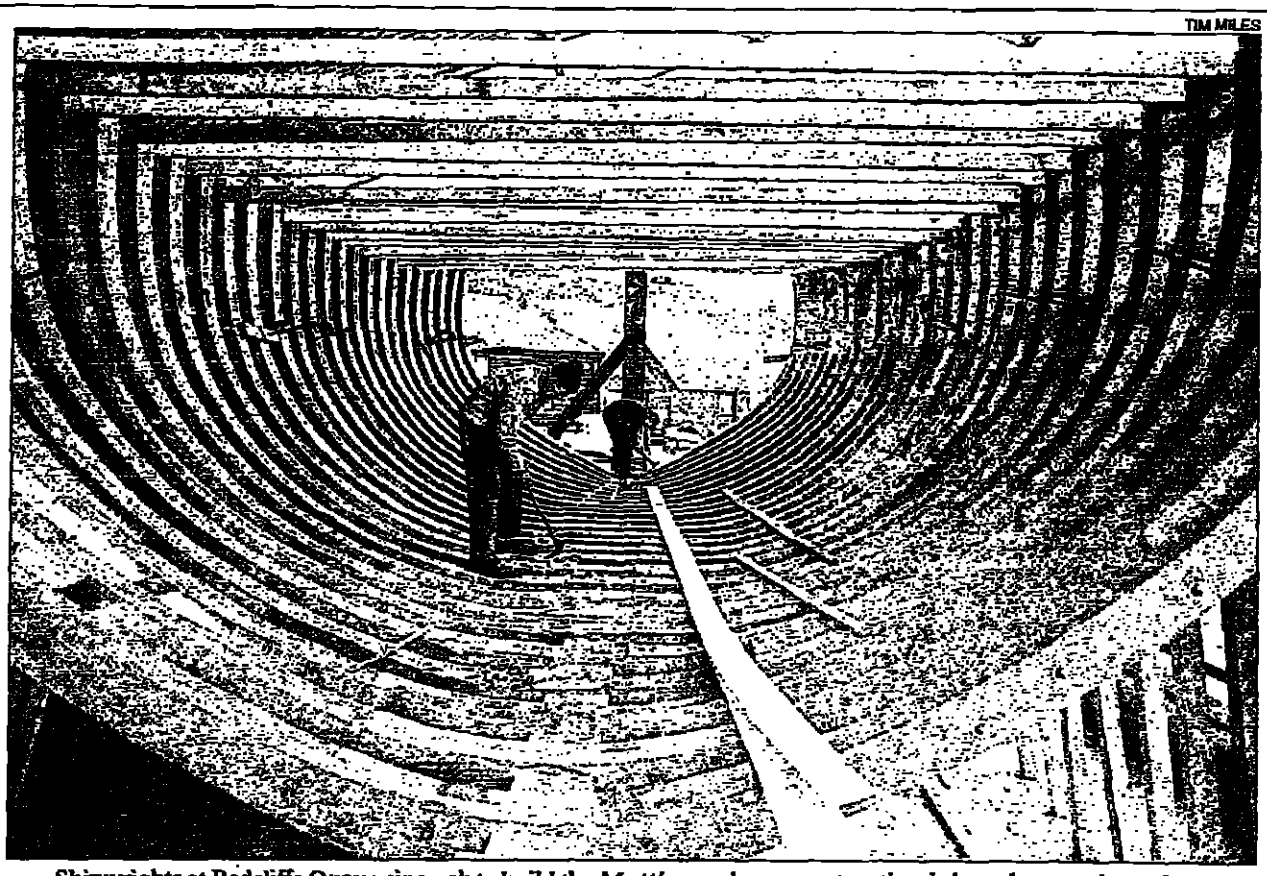
The Department of Social Security faces about 24 challenges a year, and Customs and Excise, the Inland Revenue, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Health each face about 12.

The rise of judicial review has increased pressure for reform and last month the Law Commission produced a package of proposals, including creating a right of appeal to a court or tribunal in cases involving the homeless.

The proposals produced a mixed welcome among judges and lawyers at a conference on Saturday at Warwick University. Lee Bridges, who produced a research paper on judicial review for the Public Law Project, a charity, said they would make "significant changes" to the process for obtaining leave for judicial review, which "could place new burdens on applicants, in practice making the procedure less accessible to members of the public".

He welcomed, however, the commission's proposal that legal aid authorities should consider "the wider public interest" when deciding whether to grant legal aid to enable a challenge to go ahead.

Legal pages 37, 39
Law report, page 42



Shipwrights at Redcliffe Quay using oak to build the Matthew, whose construction is based on modern plans

Replica ship to follow in the wake of Cabot

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

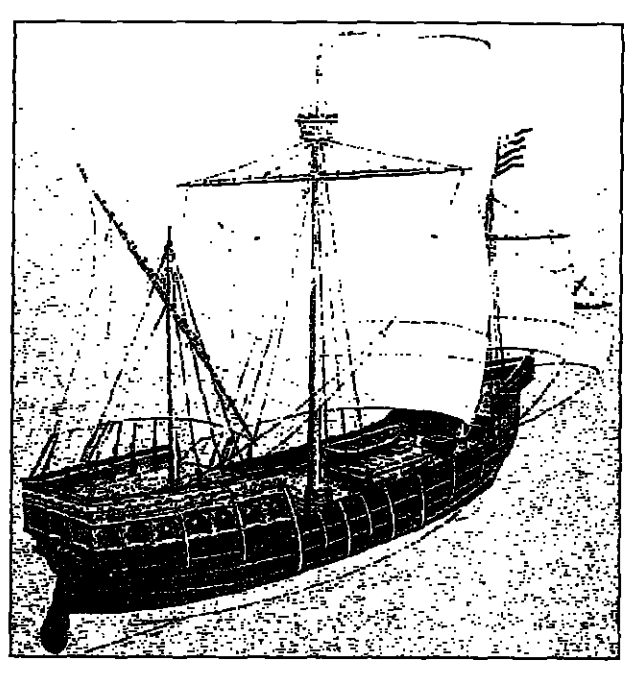
A REPLICA of the ship in which John Cabot made his maiden voyage to the New World is to sail across the Atlantic in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the navigator's discovery of North America in 1497.

The copy of the Tudor cargo ship *Matthew*, being built by shipwrights at Bristol, should be ready for sea trials next September. It will then take centre stage at Bristol's International Festival of the Sea before following Cabot's route to Newfoundland. The shipwrights are working to drawings by Colin Mudie, a

naval architect, as no historic drawings exist.

Cabot hoped to find a sea route to China and Japan. Instead the Italian-born sailor landed at "New Founde Landes" on the eastern coast of modern-day Canada, rowing ashore to plant a cross and the banners of Henry VII of England and the Pope.

Cabot and his 18 crew returned to Bristol. On visiting London, he was thanked by Henry VII and paid £10. The King urged the navigator to return on a second expedition but Cabot died, possibly in a storm.



How to present the perfect cuppa

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, TRAVEL CORRESPONDENT

ONLY 67 tea rooms in Britain can make a really good cup of tea, present it properly, serve it with style and grace and give good value for money, according to a report published yesterday.

To celebrate their work in upholding the great British tradition of afternoon tea, these bastions of quality, which range from tiny village tea shops to The Dorchester hotel, have been made members of the newly formed Guild of Tea Shops.

The Tea Council, which created the guild after an exhaustive inspection, believes that competition from pubs, coffee bars and fast-food outlets has led to a slow decline in standards. "There are thousands of outlets pur-

porting to be tea shops but few now conform to the exacting standards we believe to be desirable," Illyd Lewis, the Tea Council's executive director, said.

"Tea is our national drink, accounting for 42 per cent of everything we drink in Britain. Since 80 per cent of the nation drink tea daily, most of us consider ourselves tea experts and nobody makes a good cup of tea quite like we do for ourselves. We have proved, however, that there are a lot of very good cups of

tea to be had outside the home."

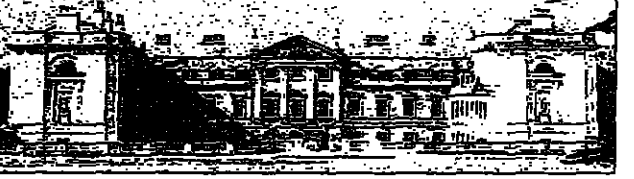
The tradition of afternoon tea was probably started at Woburn Abbey by Anna Maria, wife of the seventh Duke of Bedford, early in the 19th century. Although it was originally intended to stave off the pangs of hunger between lunch and dinner, it quickly became a convenient excuse to meet for a gossip.

It was also somewhere an unchaperoned lady could arrange to meet friends without sullying her reputation. "A

good tea shop today should have the same ambience. You should be happy to see your daughter go there," Mr Lewis said.

To become members of the guild, tea shops must serve at least four varieties of tea, have undamaged and spotlessly clean crockery, serve lemon as well as milk, produce excellent cakes, scones or sandwiches, have helpful, friendly staff and, of course, produce a pot of really good tea.

Purists may be surprised to learn that using china teapots is not a condition of membership. "We have proved that metal teapots do not affect the taste in any way. We would prefer matching tea pots and crockery but realistically we have to accept that metal pots are sometimes more efficient," Mr Lewis said.



Woburn Abbey played host to the first tea parties

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man faces murder charges

A man appeared in court yesterday accused of murdering three teenagers who were thought to have died while glue-sniffing until scientific tests showed that they had been strangled. Members of a 40-strong crowd at Sunderland Magistrates' Court shouted abuse as Steven Grieveson, 24, stepped into the dock. He was remanded in custody until December 30.

Jail chief guilty

Jogendraneth Rajcoomar, 42, of Wendlebury, Oxfordshire, was convicted at St Albans Crown Court of fraudulently obtaining £9,500 in expenses while a prison governor at The Mount, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire. He was remanded in custody to await sentence.

Class aide quits

A former chairman of school governors, Ian Senior, 35, resigned as a non-teaching classroom assistant at a Leeds primary school on the eve of a disciplinary hearing. It had been alleged that he gave boys "explicit" sex lessons at his home during school holidays.

Ferry barged

A Devonport to Torpoint ferry with 100 passengers on board was hit by a Royal Navy barge that broke from its moorings yesterday. Damage was slight and there were no injuries.

Disney delight

Ashley Fowle, 4, of Northfleet in Kent, who is recovering after brain surgery in America, has been invited to switch on the Christmas lights at Disney World in Florida.

Never too old

Dr Neville Smith, 62, of Nottingham, has become the oldest man to pass the Member of the Royal College of Physicians exam. "I should have done it 30 years ago," he said.

Sea death

The body of a man aged 80 was recovered from the sea off Cornwall after a search prompted by the discovery of a walking frame on the end of Porthleven pier.

Stab victim

The son of Bobby Noble, a Manchester United fullback in the 1960s, has been stabbed to death. Grant Noble, 26, was killed in a fight outside a pub in Sale, Greater Manchester.

Desktop tiger

A tiger-shaped Chinese incense burner that once adorned the desk of General Gordon of Khartoum was sold for £37,800 to an anonymous buyer at Christie's in London.

Polystyrene turns into tropical wood

By NICK NUTTALL

POLYSTYRENE can be recycled and made into fake tropical hardwoods for furniture and floors, researchers said yesterday.

The centre for Economics and Business Research in London says the plastic - 40,000 tonnes of which is thrown away in Britain every year - can be turned into a fake timber that looks and feels like the real thing.

The report, carried out on behalf of the British Plastics Federation, found that the fake timber can be coloured and given grain to resemble endangered hardwoods such as mahogany and ash.

Several firms have started to develop the product, using a process devel-

oped in Britain. Linda Trotman of Glymved International in Coleshill, Birmingham, which makes the artificial wood, said screws could be drilled into it and it had the added benefit that it did not suffer woodworm or rot.

Environmentalists are becoming increasingly alarmed at the levels of mahogany logged in Brazil and other South American countries. The biggest export markets are Britain and the United States. Last month nations attending the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species in America voted narrowly against trade restrictions.



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Ministers could avoid turning tax vote into a credibility test

The Chancellor warned rebel MPs that the party would never forgive them if they brought down the Government. "Some mothers do 'ave them — and I sometimes think we have more than most." The speaker was not Kenneth Clarke, though it is easy to imagine him saying that, but Denis Healey. He was talking in June 1977 after the minority Labour Government had been defeated seven times in one evening on amendments to the Finance Bill costing £450 million a year. These forced him to change the balance of his income tax proposals.

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

Finance Bill are rare, they are not unprecedented. They are usually more damaging politically than financially, undermining the Government's authority. That would be the result if the Government loses the procedural vote on VAT this evening. This would permit amendments to be tabled to the Finance Bill in the new year cancelling the already enacted increase in VAT on domestic fuel from next April.

A reversal of an already approved tax change is within the legal rules and constitutional precedents. Each year's Finance Bill often alters provisions enacted the year before. At the extreme, whole taxes can be proposed and repealed during the course of a single parliament, as happened with the poll tax between 1988 and 1992.

The unusual feature is putting a tax increase into law so far ahead. The second stage of the extension of VAT was first proposed by Norman Lamont in March 1993 and made law in the last Finance Act. Even at the time several ministers doubted the wisdom of announcing tax increases so far in advance, and in two stages, since it would maximise opposition.

Their doubts have been redoubled since then. Some ministers wish Mr Clarke had used the opportunity provided by the strong public finances to cancel the second stage of the extension. The Treasury is reluctant to give up revenue already approved and Mr Clarke believes that such a change would send the wrong signal about the Government's determination to put public finances right.

The warnings last night from Mr Clarke that defeat would mean a reshaping of the Finance Bill, involving either cuts in public spending or an increase in other taxes, say more about the closeness of the vote than the real financial implications. Even a defeat in the new year on the level of VAT on domestic fuel, as opposed to tonight's procedural motion, would not make a big dent in the Budget calculations given the favourable trend of borrowing. What it would show, as the 1977 vote did, is that the Government is so weak that it is unable to command a majority on important issues without turning them into a vote of confidence, as last week on the European Budget Bill. That political message, rather than the loss of tax revenue, is crucial.

However, those making dire prophecies about the Major administration should study the press cuttings for 1977. The Callaghan Government was in much greater trouble then. On the day it lost the Finance Bill votes, including the Lawson-Rooker-Wise amendment requiring indexation of tax allowances, the Government also had to abandon its Scottish and Welsh devolution Bill because a guillotine motion had been defeated and it suffered serious setbacks on other measures. Such Finance Bill votes are inherently irresponsible. MPs are not being offered a choice between alternative ways of achieving the Government's borrowing and tax objectives. They will be voting for or against a highly unpopular measure with no direct consequences aside from Mr Clarke's general threats. The Commons should, rather, be asked to decide between various tax options within an agreed revenue target. That in an agreed revenue target. That in an agreed revenue target. That in an agreed revenue target.

BY PETER RIDDELL

I am trying to help us win the next election under John Major's leadership, says Sumberg

Loyalist's defection raises hopes of Tory VAT rebels

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

REBEL Tories were buoyed last night by the surprise defection of a government loyalist to their planned revolt over the introduction of VAT on fuel.

As junior Tories juggled anxiously with voting figures, David Sumberg declared that he would defy the party line in tonight's Commons vote on VAT.

Mr Sumberg, MP for Bury South, said he hoped that ministers would be forced to drop plans that would be electorally damaging. "I think I am helping the Government by my action. In the end it could be a decision that can help us win the next general election under the leadership

of the present Prime Minister."

The rebels appeared to be dividing into two camps: those making it publicly known that they would not support the Government and those who maintained that they would leave their decision until tonight's vote. Labour insisted that the number of Tories preparing to defy the whips would run into double figures, with most abstaining and possibly four voting against the Government.

Nicholas Winterton, MP for Macclesfield, has become the standard-bearer of the VAT rebels, having voted against the proposals to increase the tax on domestic fuel to 8 per

cent last April. Announcing his intention to vote against the Government again, he said: "The decision to proceed with the second tranche of VAT on domestic fuel bills in my view will be widely resented and will reopen wounds which have been festering already for something like 18 months."

His traditional allies have been more coy this time, although ministers hold little hope of persuading two previous rebels to switch sides tonight. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills) and William Powell (Corby) joined Mr Winterton last year when the Government survived threats of a VAT rebellion by only 10 votes, despite having a majority of 19.

The permutations of tonight's vote have been complicated by the fact that the Government now formally has a Commons minority since it withdrew the whip from eight Tory rebels last week and a ninth resigned the party whip. Although four of the Euro-rebels who lost the whip have indicated they will not defy the Government on VAT, five are making maximum use of their new-found freedom.

Those outcasts who believed that they might be welcomed back into the fold after a short period of "good behaviour" will not have been impressed by ministers' indication this week that the party whip will not be handed back in the near future.

Of the Euro-rebels, Mr Shepherd and Sir Richard Bedy (Holland with Boston) are most likely to side against the Government, while Tony



Nicholas Winterton, above left, and David Sumberg will vote against the Government. Richard Shepherd, below left, and Phil Gallie, are also set to rebel



Marlow (Northampton North), Christopher Gill (Ludlow) and Michael Cartiss (Great Yarmouth), have held out the prospect of further defiance, although each has stated his intentions as enigmatically as possible.

Mr Gill said: "I am keeping my options open. Last time

round I was obliged to vote for VAT on fuel because I was taking the Conservative whip, but I am in a slightly different position now the whip is withdrawn."

Phil Gallie, MP for Ayr, said he would abstain rather than vote against the Government, but added: "It is a bad



move to have introduced this. It hits the elderly, the vulnerable and families with mortgages and children. It hits low-income groups. Domestic fuel isn't a matter of choice. It's a matter of necessity."

George Gardiner, page 20
Leading article, page 21

Think again or risk another 'poll tax', MPs say

BY ALICE THOMSON AND JONATHAN PRYNN

BACKBENCH Tory MPs warned the Government last night that they should reconsider increasing VAT on fuel or the measure could become as explosive as the poll tax.

They were aided by Labour who kept up the pressure on potential rebel Tories to vote down the increase.

Today MPs will vote on a procedural motion tabled by Labour which would enable a full debate and vote in the new year on fuel VAT, which came in at 8 per cent last April and is rising to 17.5 per cent in April.

Sir Rhodes Boyson, Tory MP for Brent North, was scathing about VAT on fuel but refused to announce which way he would vote. He told the House in the fourth day of the Budget debate: "To my mind basic things should not be taxed at all. VAT on fuel is a bad tax. It hits the old, the unemployed, I fear it would be resented whatever we do. I warn the Government it's on dangerous territory with this. It may become the equivalent of the community charge."

The Government had won power on a promise to cut taxes. Instead it had put taxes up and people did not like it, he said to Labour cheers.

"Instead of reducing taxes, we should get rid of the 17.5 per cent VAT on fuel to show the country that the promised land is coming," he said.

David Sumberg, Tory MP for Surrey South, announced that he would be voting against the Government. He told the House: "There is scope to revisit the VAT on fuel issue and limit it to 8 per cent."

He said that the motion simply permitted a "rethink, reconsideration, review" on the VAT on fuel increase. "After a great deal of thought, for I have supported the Government through thick and thin, I do

not believe we can allow this final opportunity to pass by just to consider whether we are doing the right thing. I will vote in the lobby which will give us the chance to think again."

Chris Smith, Shadow Heritage Secretary, opening the debate for Labour, said it was "patent nonsense" to claim fuel VAT was needed to fulfil the Government's commitments made at the Rio Earth Summit.

At last Thursday's question time, John Major said the tax had a "significant environmental impact". But, Mr Smith said: "Even on the Government's own figures, the total amount of carbon dioxide which will be saved by imposing VAT on domestic fuel will be less than 1 per cent of Britain's overall output. We will be achieving minimal environmental gain for maximum social pain."

Mr Smith told the House that the last two years had seen "the biggest tax rise in history, equivalent to 7p in the pound on income tax, and the Government have the gall to think that perhaps 2p or 3p or even 5p off income tax in an election year will somehow compensate in people's minds for that tax-rising story."

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY: In the Commons, questions to social security ministers, the Overseas Development minister and the Attorney-General were followed by the fourth day of debate on the Budget.

In the Lords, proposed salary increases for government ministers were considered. There was a debate on conflicts in Africa.

TODAY: Health ministers and the Prime Minister will take questions then MPs will complete their five-day Budget debate. There will be a vote on a Labour amendment to the Budget resolution on VAT on fuel. In the Lords there will be a debate on the Government's White Paper on the future of the BBC.

Labour fears VAT on public transport

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY

LABOUR leaders claimed last night that plans to extend VAT to funfairs and amusement parks could herald VAT on public transport.

Ministers have announced that VAT at 17.5 per cent is to be introduced in April on transport provided in theme parks or at places of historic or cultural interest.

The "roller-coaster tax" will also apply to pleasure flights and hot-air balloon rides, and there will be new charges on parking at airports when passengers are transferred between the car park and airport terminal.

The move, introduced as a Commons order, which does not require debate, was con-

demned by Labour as the "thin end of the wedge" that would be followed in due course by VAT on public transport.

Gordon Brown, shadow Chancellor, said that VAT on amusement rides would raise about £45 million, although it was not clear how extensive the plans were. He said last night: "It is our fear that the Government may extend VAT to transport as a whole. We know that there were discussions with British Rail about extending VAT on rail travel, raising some £1 billion."

Treasury officials said that the charges would apply only to forms of transport provided on private sites.

Of the Euro-rebels, Mr Shepherd and Sir Richard Bedy (Holland with Boston) are most likely to side against the Government, while Tony

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George Gardiner, page 20
Leading article, page 21

Defeat could upset Clarke's calculations

BY JILL SHERMAN
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

KENNETH CLARKE may find himself rewriting his Budget after the New Year if Labour succeeds in pushing through two crucial amendments on VAT on fuel in the next few weeks.

Tonight MPs vote on a procedural motion which effectively prevents MPs from debating or voting on VAT matters during the passage of the Finance Bill. If the Budget resolution is passed unamended MPs will have no further chance to reverse the second stage of VAT, which rises from 8 per cent to 17.5 per cent next April and is

already law. However, MPs will vote first tonight on a Labour amendment which would allow a vote on the rise.

The amendment (to the Ways and Means resolution) states that issues over VAT should not be raised during the debate on the Finance Bill "other than in respect of VAT on fuel and power relating to domestic and charity use". Labour hopes that by using a specific amendment, linked only to VAT on fuel, it cannot be accused of wrecking the Budget and will therefore maximise the number of Tory rebels prepared to support the measure. Some Tories may be prepared to back the measure to extract further concessions

on the impact of the new tax. If the amendment is passed tonight, nothing happens automatically and there is no change in law. However, as one insider put it, the vote "would set off a torpedo to the government's Finance Bill".

Labour would then be able to table an amendment, or draft a new clause to the Finance Bill when it reaches its committee stage in the New Year. The amendment would call for the repeal of the section of the last Finance Act implementing the second rise in VAT.

If this was passed, the Government would by law have to stop the rise to 17.5 per cent going ahead in April. The

Chancellor would then have to come forward with new ways of raising £1.5 billion to balance the Budget he delivered last week. In addition he would have to consider scrapping the £600 million second stage of compensation for vulnerable groups, due this April, most of which is built into benefit rates.

Parliamentary officials said last night that it was highly unusual for a Budget resolution to be amended. Although Finance Bills are frequently amended in minor ways, a defeat for the Government on such a substantial issue has not occurred for about 16 years.

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Russia invade

FROM RICHARD

RUSSIA yesterday moved closer to direct military intervention in the breakaway republic of Chechnya, when Moscow's chief negotiator, General Igor Sergeev, announced that Russian troops would be sent to the region. The move was seen as a significant escalation of the conflict, which has been ongoing since 1992. General Sergeev, who is also the head of the Russian Ministry of Defense, said that the Russian government was determined to restore order in Chechnya and to protect the interests of the Russian Federation. He also said that the Russian government was willing to negotiate with the Chechen rebels, but only on the basis of the Russian constitution and the principles of international law. The Chechen rebels, led by Dzhokhar Dudayev, have been fighting for the independence of Chechnya since 1991. They have been accused of human rights abuses and of being a threat to the stability of the Russian Federation. The Russian government has been accused of using excessive force against the Chechen rebels and of violating international law. The conflict in Chechnya has caused a large number of people to be displaced and has resulted in significant loss of life and property. The Russian government has been criticized for its handling of the conflict and for its failure to protect the rights of the Chechen people. The Chechen rebels have been criticized for their violence and for their failure to negotiate with the Russian government. The conflict in Chechnya is a complex and difficult one, and it is likely to continue for some time. It is important for the Russian government and the Chechen rebels to find a way to resolve the conflict peacefully and to restore order to the region.

Caucasus rests security bandit track

FROM RICHARD

THE CAUCASUS region, which has been a hotbed of conflict since the end of the Soviet Union, is now facing a new security threat. A band of armed men, known as the "Caucasus bandits", has been operating in the region, targeting civilians and government officials. The bandits are believed to be composed of former Soviet soldiers and mercenaries, and they are active in the mountainous regions of the Caucasus. They have been responsible for a number of attacks, including the killing of several government officials and the abduction of civilians. The Russian government has been accused of failing to protect the region from the bandits, and it has been criticized for its handling of the situation. The Chechen rebels have also been accused of supporting the bandits, and they have been criticized for their failure to negotiate with the Russian government. The Caucasus region is a complex and difficult one, and it is likely to continue to be a hotbed of conflict for some time. It is important for the Russian government and the Chechen rebels to find a way to resolve the conflict peacefully and to restore order to the region.

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Berlusconi set new allies with

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS

THE BRITISH Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has set out his vision for the future of the United Kingdom. He said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the European Union, and that it should continue to be a member of the Commonwealth. He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the United Nations (UN). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Health Organization (WHO). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Bank (WB). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Tourism Organization (WTO). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Postal Union (WPU). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Telecommunication Union (ITU). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Health Organization (WHO). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Bank (WB). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Tourism Organization (WTO). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Blair said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Postal Union (WPU). He also said that the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the World Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Army chiefs inspect border force

Russia poised to invade Chechenia

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA yesterday moved closer to direct military intervention in the breakaway republic of Chechenia, when Moscow's most senior security officials inspected an armoured invasion force in the north Caucasus.

General Pavel Grachev, the Defence Minister, Viktor Yerin, the Interior Minister and Sergei Stepashin, the head of counter-intelligence, flew to the border town of Mozdok where hundreds of tanks and armoured personnel carriers have been assembled.

Moscow also admitted for the first time that Russian planes were responsible for a series of air raids on Grozny, the Chechen capital, last week in which at least nine civilians were killed. General Grachev said that the planes "were striking at the forces of [General Dzhokhar] Dudayev", the Chechen leader.

Officials would not comment on the unscheduled

visit, but it seemed clear that the Kremlin's most senior military men were finalising details of a plan to reimpose Moscow's authority over Chechenia, three years after it declared independence.

Moscow has also increased its propaganda against General Dudayev. "Armed groups of terrorists are arriving in Chechenia, possibly to stage subversive and terrorist actions," a spokesman said at an official information centre established to deal with the crisis. "As Chechenia is a subject of the Russian Federation, the rules of crossing the Russian state border are thus violated." The remarks, which apparently referred to more than 200 anti-Russian volunteers from other former Soviet republics, were probably made to provide an additional pretext for invading.

However, the military option is fraught with difficulties for President Yeltsin. Such action would probably

seal the fate of 19 Russian soldiers, captured in Chechenia ten days ago. The force could be expected to overcome General Dudayev's supporters, who are armed mainly with light weapons, but there would probably be significant civilian casualties. The occupying Russians would also be extremely vulnerable to guerrilla attacks.

The Russian leader is also likely to be criticised by parliamentary deputies, who have attacked the Government's handling of the crisis and warned the Kremlin to avoid the use of force.

General Dudayev, a former Soviet air force general who has vowed to fight to the death if his nation is attacked, said he was prepared to negotiate. However, he has refused to meet Chechen opposition leaders and implied that he will open a dialogue with Russia only on the basis of bilateral talks between two sovereign states.

Restoring Reichstag to unified Berlin

By ROGER BOYES IN BONN AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF



Democracy in flames: the Reichstag ablaze on February 27, 1933

THE Reichstag, a potent symbol of a united Germany, celebrated its 100th birthday yesterday.

By the stormy standards of the controversial Berlin edifice, it was a quiet anniversary. Within days, the house on the River Spree, dismissed as the "imperial monkey cage" by Kaiser Wilhelm II, will be a building site. Sir Norman Foster, the British architect, won the competition to redesign the Reichstag in preparation for the long-delayed move of the German parliament from Bonn.

The first step will be to rip out the asbestos. Then, before the reconstruction begins, it will be wrapped up by Christo, the Bulgarian packaging artist. By 1999, the Reichstag should be ready to resume the democratic tradition interrupted by the arson attack on February 27, 1933. That event, ruthlessly exploited by the Nazi propaganda machine, marked an end to parliamentary democracy in Germany.

In May 1945 the Reichstag represented another milestone of German history: two Soviet soldiers hoisted a red flag on one of the corner turrets, thus marking the end of the battle for Berlin.

The Reichstag then was a battered shell, blackened and pitted by gunfire. The 50ft-long carved inscription, "To the German People", could barely be deciphered. For several years the building was

allowed to remain a ruin, overrun by rats and a favoured location for black marketers.

In 1954 the dome, the pride of the original architect Paul Wallot, had to be blown up because it was about to collapse and drag down half the building with it. Later the West German Government decided to restore the building as a museum and occasional conference centre.

The original building of 1894-94 shows strong influence of the monumental style of Sir John Vanbrugh, its corner towers recalling Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

Sir Norman's working designs are rather more modest than his original proposals — Wallot was also obliged, a century ago, to change his plans several times — but they will try to present the Reichstag as a symbol of democracy rather than of German power.

The renewed building will feature a dome, incorporating a device to concentrate and redirect natural daylight into the new chamber. The public will be allowed access to the roof level and the dome.

Sir Norman said when short-listed for the project: "Initially I decided not to enter the competition as the chances seemed so remote. My wife persuaded me to change my mind and we entered the competition for the master plan as well. We wanted to create a new sense of space, a new openness."

Caucasus mafia rests secure in bandit tradition

FROM ANATOLE LIEVEN IN GROZNY

THE spiral of events that has brought Russia to the brink of a full-scale military invasion of Chechenia comes against the background of a long history of enmity between the Caucasian republic and Moscow.

The Chechens have a fearsome, even sinister reputation. However, when Wilhelm Weisserth, a Ukrainian German, deported to Central Asia by Stalin, first encountered them in the 1940s, he fell in love with the Chechens in general, and a Chechen woman in particular.

"Of all the nationalities I met in Central Asia, they were the most impressive," he said. "In such difficult circumstances, they managed to keep their dignity and to teach their religion and their traditions to their children. They stuck together and shared everything with each other."

Herr Weisserth is now known as Haji Muhammad,

to fight for Chechenia's independence from Russia.

But in recent years, Chechen traditions have bred a new and less honourable element: organised crime.

This development in Chechen society has been encouraged partly by traditions of banditry and an ancient national obsession with weapons, machismo, and displays of physical courage. It has also been fostered by an underlying feeling, common to most Chechens, that after what they have suffered at the hands of the Russians in the past, any attack on the Russians is morally justified.

Chechen criminality, as much as Russian intransigence, has in recent years helped to destroy any possibility that the republic might be allowed quietly to drift away from Russia. Moscow largely ignored Chechenia for more than two years, but the Yeltsin administration was increasingly infuriated by repeated Chechen raids on Russian trains and oil shipments crossing the republic, and finally by several hijackings by Chechens within Russia itself.

The "Chechen mafia" has become notorious as one of the leading forces in Russian organised crime. Its disputes have also helped fuel political divisions and violence within Chechenia, with different groups backing the Dudayev regime and the opposition. Both forces contain notorious criminals, and neither has any commitment to economic stability and democracy.

Chechen criminality has also divided ordinary Russians over the prospect of military intervention in Chechenia. On the one hand, there is a grudging acceptance of the Chechen desire for independence; on the other, there is deep resentment of Chechen criminals "preying on Russia".

In the 19th century, the writer Lermontov romanticised the anti-Russian Chechen fighters, but also wrote a famous lullaby about "the wicked Chechen" with a long knife, waiting across the river. The Chechen is still waiting, and the Russians still have not worked out how to settle with him for good.



a respected local elder, religious authority, and patriarch of an enormous family in the small Chechen village of Mechekhi.

He is not unaware of the darker side of the Chechen tradition. In his capacity as an elder, he spends much of his time trying to resolve Chechenia's endless blood feuds with the help of a mixture of Islamic law and a German peasant's common sense.

Chechen religious and social traditions were the backbone of national resistance to Russian conquest in the 19th century, just as they were under Soviet rule. Even the Soviet secret police found it almost impossible to infiltrate the closely knit families and religious brotherhoods. This fierce sense of national identity is today driving the supporters of President Dudayev

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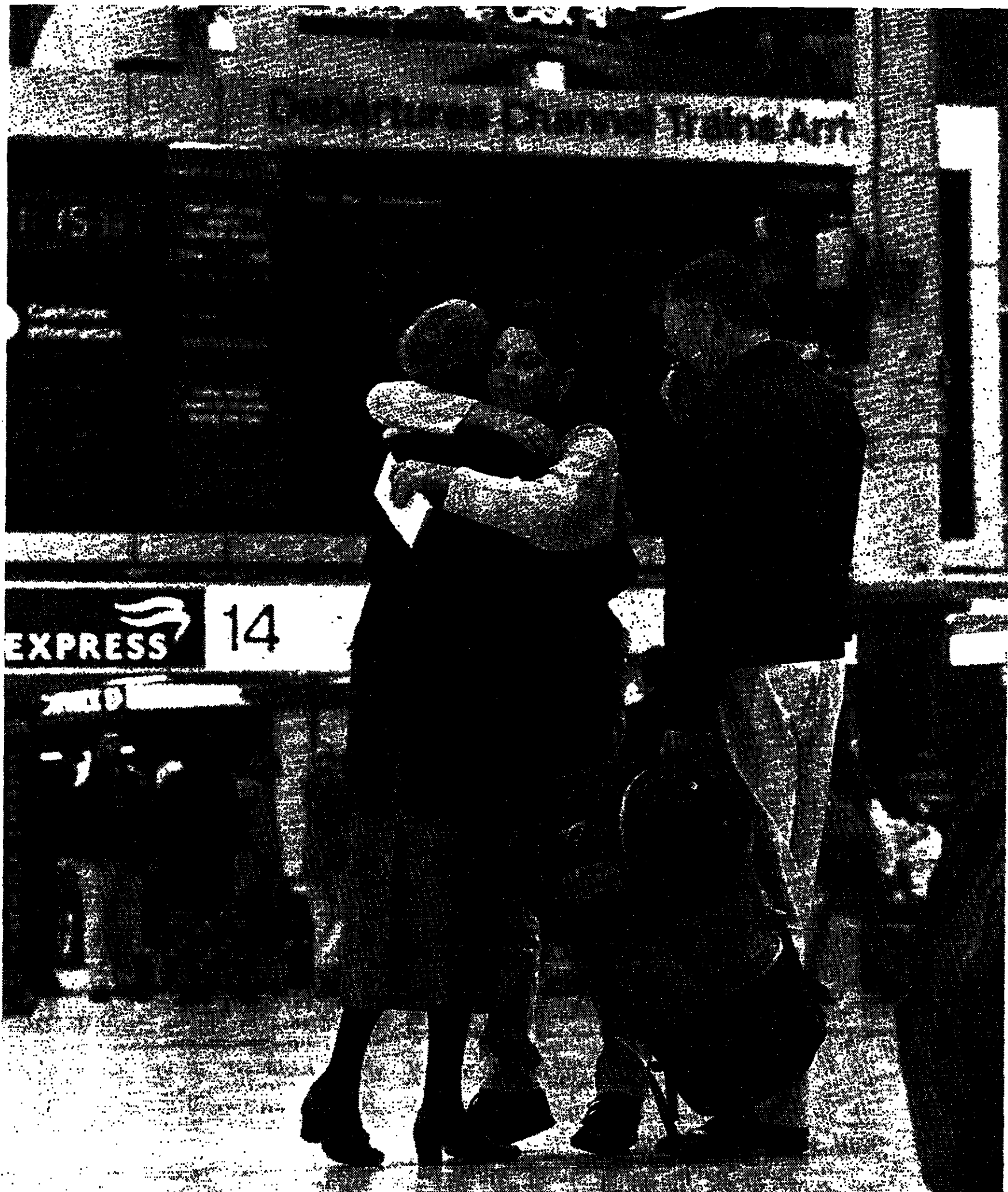
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Berlusconi setback as new allies win polls

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE embattled Government of Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian Prime Minister, suffered another setback yesterday as centre-left parties defeated coalition forces in four out of six mayoral elections involving about two million voters.

In the wake of the defeats, Umberto Bossi, leader of the Northern League, threatened to bring down the Government of which his party is a partner.

In the key contest in the northern city of Brescia, Mino Martinazzoli, the former Christian Democrat leader and founder of the centrist Italian Popular Party (PPI), crushed Vito Gnudi, the

Northern League minister, taking 56.5 per cent for an experimental alliance with the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS). Signor Gnudi, who was backed by Signor Berlusconi's Forza Italia party, managed only 43.5 per cent of the run-off vote despite Brescia being a traditional stronghold of the League.

Opposition candidates also won in Sondrio in the north, Massa in the centre and Brindisi in the southern region of Apulia. Only in the Adriatic port of Pescara did a candidate supported by the Forza Italia and the neo-Fascist-led National Alliance manage a narrow victory over the leftist opposition contender.

Kuchma wins financial deal in return for surrendering former Soviet arsenal

Ukraine signature allows arms treaty to be implemented

FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN BUDAPEST

WITH full ceremony, Ukraine yesterday signed the non-proliferation treaty, agreeing to scrap all its nuclear weapons and thus clearing the way for the immediate implementation of the long-delayed Start-1 treaty.

In the presence of President Clinton, President Yeltsin and John Major, President Kuchma signed the instruments of ratification that were deposited with the leaders of the three other nuclear guarantor powers. Speaking proudly of the example his country was setting to other would-be nuclear powers in rejecting nuclear status, President Kuchma said his signature would dispel the doubts of those who have criticised Ukraine for holding on to its nuclear arsenal. Kiev had received the security guarantees it needed and was now promised considerable financial help to destroy its remaining stocks.

Ukraine's long-delayed accession to the treaty clears the way for the Salt-1 treaty, negotiated almost two decades ago with the former Soviet Union, to come into immediate effect. It provides for a 30 per cent cut in the number of long-range missiles held by America and the former Soviet Union, but could not be implemented until all four nuclear successor states of the Soviet Union — Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan — had ratified the Start agreement and the subsequent 1992 Lisbon protocol.

For the first three years of independence Ukraine appeared to be using its nuclear weapons as bargaining chips to wring attention and aid from the West, to the dismay of Russian and Western leaders. But former President Kravchuk, breaking a long stalemate with his parliament, finally signed a trilateral statement, with Mr Yeltsin and Mr Clinton, in Moscow on January 14 this year. That was then ratified by the Kiev parliament, and the exchange of

documents yesterday by Mr Kuchma, who succeeded Mr Kravchuk, means that the Start-2 treaty, which provides for a further 50 per cent cut in missiles, can also come into force.

The way is now open for a review conference next year of the 1967 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which 161 nations are now party. At this meeting the signatories are expected to vote for the indefinite, unconditional extension of the treaty, which aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and binds nuclear powers not to transfer the technology or otherwise help

received so much aid from the United States that it is now the fourth largest recipient, after Israel, Egypt and Russia.

American officials expressed dismay last month, however, and again in Budapest yesterday, that European governments, especially the British, are dragging their feet in delivering promised emergency financial aid to Ukraine to help tidy economic and political reform.

President Clinton, who originally had intended to miss the Budapest summit, decided to come at the last minute because of the symbolic importance he attached to yesterday's ceremony.

Brussels European Union Finance Ministers endorsed plans yesterday to grant Ukraine a loan of 85 million euros (\$67 million) on condition that it makes progress in closing the Chernobyl nuclear plant.

The EU loan is part of an international effort to meet a predicted \$640-million shortfall in Ukraine's balance of payments.

Henning Christophersen, EU Finance Commissioner, fully expects Kiev to meet its commitments. Earlier this year, Ukraine became the first former Soviet republic to conclude a wideranging trade and political co-operation deal with the EU. Yesterday's approval of the loan was also in recognition of the progress Ukraine has made under President Kuchma towards sweeping market reforms.

Edmond Alphandery, the French Finance Minister, said: "Nobody contests the need to support the Ukraine government. It must be encouraged." The minister even proposed to turn the loan into a gift.

The ministers emphasised that the loan should be linked to implementing an EU "action plan" to close Chernobyl. Part of the power plant exploded in 1986, but other parts are still in operation. (AP)

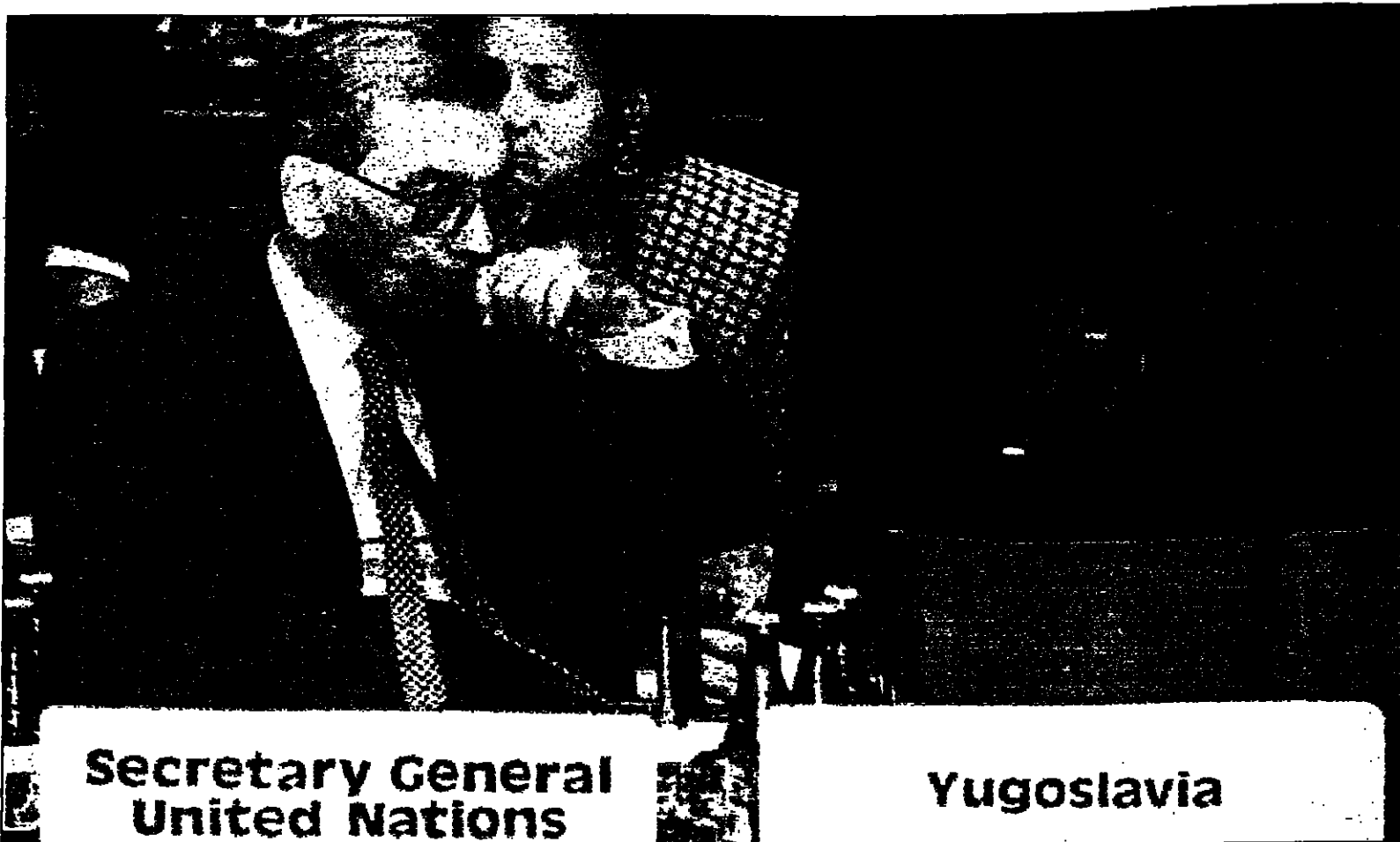
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

non-nuclear states in the building of nuclear weapons.

The signing ceremony, a few hours after the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) summit began, was the high point of an otherwise insipid agenda, and does much to end American and Russian suspicion of the Government in Kiev. President Kuchma has just been feted by the Clinton Administration on a well publicised visit to Washington, and has



Kuchma: Ukraine is setting good example



Secretary General United Nations

Yugoslavia

Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, contemplates Yugoslavia's vacant seat at the CSCE conference in Budapest yesterday

Limousine parade stretches protocol

BY MICHAEL BINYON

SUMMIT SKETCH

Even by the standards of the White House's frantic pace, seven hours is a rushed state visit. And by the time President Clinton had emerged bleary from Air Force One into the foggy Budapest morning and been whisked in his imported presidential limousine to the summit, there was hardly enough time for decent vote-winning pictures — and certainly not enough to greet the other guests.

There were plenty of them — in all, 52 heads of state and government needed airport parking space for their official government planes and limousines with police escorts to sweep them along the roped-off streets to the conference centre. Some smaller countries found the logistics beyond them: the former Soviet republics appear to have done a deal with a German Mercedes dealer, who sent out a fleet of black limousines. Shared among the lesser-known republics and plastered with official stickers in English — "Kyrgyzstan", "Georgia", "Uzbekistan" or "Azerbaijan" — they served the purpose, well, though the few

Hungarians allowed into the sealed city centre had little idea where these countries are or who runs them.

No one could miss the Clinton cavalcade, however — the inimitable, majestic sweep of the huge, armoured cars, the sirens, the outriders and of course the Secret Service, with their crewcuts, earphones, tell-tale revolver bulges and charming smiles. Nor was there any doubt when President Yeltsin purred past, his Zil a perfect Soviet replica of a 1970s American stretch-limo, with his equally charming bodyguards in full pursuit.

Protocol is always a sticky point at summits, but this one was a nightmare for the Hungarian hosts. Arrival times are the statesman's version of one-upmanship. There is no problem with the lesser fry — they know their place, and arrive early. By tradition at European summits, President Mitterrand arrives last because he is the only President. His official car has even been spotted cruising around the block, trying to ensure a late arrival. At this summit there were three big

power Presidents vying for the final slot. At the Group of Seven's July summit in Naples, M. Mitterrand managed, to the fury of the White House, to come after Mr Clinton. He did again yesterday. But neither reckoned with a new contender — Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian Prime Minister, who either from self-importance or a cavalier attitude to time, came last of all.

The Hungarians must feel overwhelmed by the influx. For it was not only the Europeans — if the former Soviet republics can still count as such — and North Americans who came. The Japanese, piqued at being left out of the burgeoning club, took their observer status seriously, and also came by the plane-load. So too did delegates from other alphabetic bedfellows of the CSCE: Nato, WEU, EU, UN, Council of Europe and any organisation that thought a summit in Budapest would be fun.

The latest additions to this unwieldy talking shop, which, confusingly, is

expected to change its name to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) today, came from the Middle East. The CSCE troika — a concept borrowed from the European Union rather than Mother Russia — invited four Arab countries and Israel to a meeting to discuss spreading the CSCE empire all round the Mediterranean. The foreign ministers of Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria were invited to cash in on the peace process and join Israel for talks on an idea first floated six years ago by Spain and Italy.

For most, there was nothing new about talking to the Israelis, but for the Algerians it was something of a novelty — and all the more embarrassing after news leaked out, handing the radicals of the Islamic Salvation Front a new propaganda weapon to fire at their embattled government.

Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister, also had an embarrassment to live down. He is seen at home as the sensitive soul who probably plays the violin; instead it was revealed that he spent Sunday with his Hungarian hosts hunting — a passion of all central Europeans.

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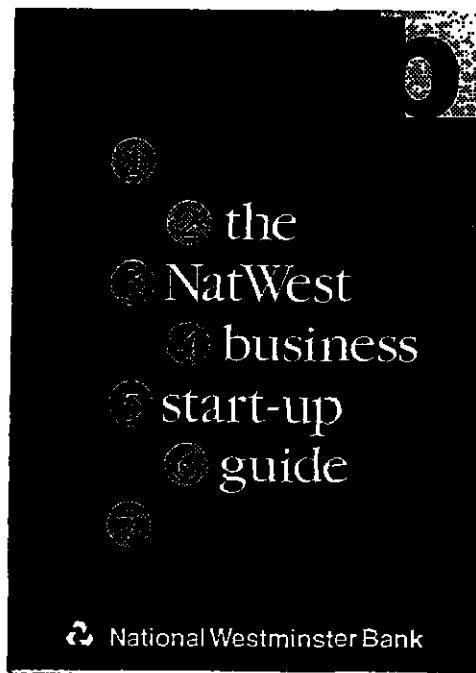
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Izetbegovic blasts West and UN for 'betrayal of Bihac'

FROM MICHAEL BINYON AND NICHOLAS WOOD IN BUDAPEST
AND JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

IN A bitter and impassioned denunciation of the world's failure to save Bihac or come to his embattled Government's aid, President Izetbegovic of Bosnia yesterday accused the West of a "mixture of incapability, hesitation and ill-will". He said this would "discredit the United Nations, ruin Nato and demoralise nations".

Addressing the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), he promised that whatever happened his people would fight on for their freedom. "Such a battle is hard to launch, but it is hard to lose. No liberation war has been lost in the past 50 years." He said there was no force in the world that would compel the 150,000 Muslim soldiers to give up weapons.

He singled out London and Paris as the two capitals that had "taken on the role of Serbia's protectors". He said nothing was being done to save Bihac, and the Bosnians had been told nothing could be done. "The whole international community and even the mighty Nato cannot save one single city," he said with heavy sarcasm.

In a sharp and pointed attack on William Perry, the American Defence Secretary — who last week conceded that

the map for the partition of the country. Mr Major coupled his appeal in Budapest for a last-minute diplomatic settlement with a graphic warning of the carnage that would follow if the UN left. "There will be more fighting, probably on a scale that spills over to neighbouring countries."

President Clinton appealed to the Bosnian Serbs to end their aggression and accept new negotiations on the basis of the Contact Group plan. "Settle your differences at the negotiating table, not the battlefield."

In a further sign that Britain's stance is moving ever closer to Russia's, Mr Major and Mr Yeltsin threw their weight behind a final "real push" by the Contact Group, and gave a warning that an American lifting of the arms embargo would lead to a "significant escalation" of the war. The two leaders reached their conclusion after a 40-minute meeting. By contrast, Mr Major spoke only fleetingly to Mr Clinton about Bosnia.

Mr Hurd, again joining forces with Alain Juppé, the French Foreign Minister, pressed home the two countries' warnings in meetings with President Izetbegovic and President Tudjman of Croatia and briefed them on Sunday's talks in Belgrade with President Milosevic. British officials insisted that none of the three presidents wanted a lifting of the arms embargo, a military solution or the withdrawal of UN troops.

At the United Nations, Boutros Boutros Ghali, the Secretary-General, proposed that the Muslim-led Bosnian Government should remove all its heavy weapons, arms factories and military headquarters from UN-declared "safe areas". In a report to the Security Council, he urged the council to respond to the fighting around Bihac by demilitarising the six UN safe areas. "The primary objective of the safe areas can be achieved only if they are completely demilitarised by all parties," Dr Boutros Ghali wrote.

Rifkind: pullout 'serious option'

FROM MICHAEL EVANS
IN GORNJI VAKUF

WITHDRAWAL of the 3,400 British troops and other United Nations forces from Bosnia-Herzegovina is now "a serious option", Malcolm Rifkind, the Defence Secretary, admitted yesterday on a two-day visit to the war zone.

Fighting by the warring factions and harassment of UN forces had deteriorated "in a grave way" in recent weeks. Withdrawal had to be seriously considered, he said, if the harassment continued.

BRITAIN

preventing UN troops from carrying out their mandate.

"There has been a lot more fighting and a lot more tension," Mr Rifkind said. "If it continues it would render the whole UN operation totally impossible." Despite the gloomy prognosis, Mr Rifkind insisted: "We don't wish to withdraw if the UN can carry on a viable role."

In central Bosnia, where Mr Rifkind will be spending his two days visiting British troops, there is no longer any fighting and, with the UN's help, the population is returning to some form of normality. However, Mr Rifkind warned: "It would be unrealistic to believe that the future of the UN in Bosnia could be based purely on what happens here in central Bosnia. The judgment is bound to be influenced by what happens in Sarajevo, Bihac and Gorazde and wherever fighting is taking place."

Before flying by helicopter to Gornji Vakuf, the headquarters of the UN's south-west sector, commanded by a British brigadier, Mr Rifkind was briefed at Split in Croatia by Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, the UN commander in Bosnia who had flown up from Sarajevo to meet him.

General Rose seemed reluctant to consider withdrawal, insisting that the UN had a moral responsibility to stay on and feed millions of people in Bosnia. "It's a tough job," he said.

He said the UN soldiers were paid to take risks and by staying in Bosnia they were



Malcolm Rifkind, the Defence Secretary, leaves the port of Split yesterday after talks with Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, the UN commander in Bosnia

sustaining the existence of the enclaves and also sustaining the Muslim-Croat federation which had ended the fighting in central Bosnia. He admitted there was a risk of failure, "but if you take that view, you would never get out of bed."

After Mr Rifkind's two-day visit to Bosnia, he will return to London and share his thoughts about withdrawal with other members of the Cabinet's overseas and defence policy committee which is due to meet on Thursday.

At a press conference in Gornji Vakuf, Mr Rifkind did

not repeat the warning by Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, on his trip to Belgrade this week, that the UN forces would be pulled out of Bosnia within weeks unless there was a peace agreement and a ceasefire. However, he made it clear that Britain and the other countries that have contributed troops to Bosnia were prepared to go for the withdrawal option if necessary.

"Withdrawal would be difficult but not impossible," he said. The UN withdrawal plan allows for a period of 165 days for all 24,000 troops to be

evacuated from Bosnia. Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge, the Chief of the Defence Staff, who is with Mr Rifkind on his trip here, said the practical problems of withdrawal would depend on whether it could be carried out in a "benign" environment. Weather conditions and the reaction of the local people would be crucial factors.

UN officers insist that withdrawal in the winter months would be out of the question and are not expecting to receive any orders for an evacuation this winter.

Priorities shift to providing for troops

FROM JOEL BRAND
IN SARAJEVO

SERB harassment of the United Nations mission in Bosnia has become so aggressive that the UN has gradually shifted the focus of its efforts from delivering relief aid for beleaguered civilians to rescuing its own troops from critical shortages of food, fuel and supplies.

The 1,220 ill-equipped Bangladeshi troops trapped in the Bihac "safe area" are the worst off of all UN peacekeepers in Bosnia, with living conditions poorer than most of the enclave's civilian population. The 180,000 people trapped in the pocket have had only one aid convoy since May, but are better prepared to fend for themselves at the onset of winter than the recently arrived

SUPPLIES

Bangladeshis. "The priority has to be to get fuel and rations just to help us survive through the winter, much less carry out our operations," said Colonel Akhtar Salim, the Bangladeshi battalion commander. The officer, speaking by satellite telephone from Bihac, declined to comment further.

The battalion does not have enough fuel to patrol or heat and light their quarters, a UN official said. Until the latest modest resupply convoy arrived, soldiers had been eating half a meal per day. Though each will have a full meal for each of the next few days, it will only last if the Serbs permit more resupply convoys. They turned back one scheduled for yesterday.

"This is a deliberately designed, carefully calculated insult against the United Nations which can only be allowed to pass at great cost," Thant Myint-U, a UN spokesman in Sarajevo said of the Serb harassment.

Top-level negotiations between the UN and the Serbs that once focused on peace settlements or aid to civilians now centre on getting food and fuel past Serb checkpoints and delivering it to increasingly desperate peacekeepers. Fighting is not making it too dangerous for the convoys; they are simply refused passage for political reasons.



Fresh bread arrives yesterday in Sarajevo as long queues built up for supplies in the freezing fog

Paris 'engineering Nato collapse'

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

FRANCE may be purposely inflaming tensions over Bosnia-Herzegovina to drive a wedge between America and Britain, according to *Time* magazine.

Its source in a report yesterday was an unnamed official in the Clinton Administration who had read an intelligence report based on electronic eavesdropping. According to this analysis, France would like to see Nato broken up and replaced by a European security alliance.

Richard Dugue, a French Foreign Ministry spokesman, said that if such an intelligence report existed it was not in line with French policy. "France is devoted to the Atlantic alliance," he said. "We wish to develop a European defence identity, but this is not incompatible with the Atlantic alliance."

William Perry, the US Defence Secretary, said that from his frequent discussions with French defence officials he had seen no evidence that they were trying to provoke a split between Britain and America. He acknowledged that for decades the French had held different views about America's role in Nato from

those held in Washington, but the two countries had managed to work together effectively and he believed they would continue to do so.

According to *Time*, however, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff are worried about a Nato split over Bosnia, although not specifically one engineered by France at the expense of Anglo-American relations. According to a secret position paper prepared for Mr Perry, America "should recognise that nothing about Bosnia is

FRANCE

worth a serious split with our Nato allies, and we are at the point where we risk losing not only Bosnia but also Nato."

The effect of these warnings about a Nato split led Mr Perry to write his own position paper for the White House advocating an "illusion-free Bosnia policy" that would "stop advancing proposals we know the allies will reject". He proposed that the Bosnian Government must accept less territory than the 51 per

cent awarded it by the Contact Group and agree to a confederation of Bosnian Serbs with Belgrade.

These ideas were greeted with dismay by the State Department and the National Security Council where the policy of upholding Bosnia's sovereignty was still paramount. America denied any key reversal of policy, but did propose a new international peace conference to work out a settlement along the lines of the Contact Group's plan.

Meanwhile, the new Republican leadership in Congress is calling for a much more hawkish policy towards the Serbs. Newt Gingrich, soon to be Speaker of the House, said the Nato allies should pull out all their forces from Bosnia, arm and train the Muslims and then warn the Serbs that they faced an all-out air attack if they launch any new offensive.

Robert Dole, the Senate leader, reiterated his call for the withdrawal of United Nations forces, the end of the arms embargo against the Muslims, and "robust bombing" of Serb military targets.

Germans' EU ideas at odds with Bonn

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GERMAN enthusiasm for enlarging or deepening the European Union seems to be flagging despite the efforts of Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, to integrate the continent.

The gulf between the lukewarm support of ordinary Germans and the Euro-zeal of the Government has been exposed by Mori and Ennig polls carried out for *Der Spiegel* and the *Financial Times*. Germans, it emerges, are far less keen than Britons to see Central European states included in the Union by the end of the century: only 24 per cent of Germans back the move, while 42 per cent of Britons are in favour.

That is a stark contrast with the Bonn Government's self-declared championship of the East. Chancellor Kohl was determined to use the German presidency to accelerate Central and East European entry to the Union. Only after horse-trading with a reluctant France did Germany gain approval for a modest invitation to Central and East European heads of Govern-

ment for talks following the European summit in Essen next weekend.

The scepticism of ordinary Germans seems to be rooted in practical concerns. The first is that the opening of frontiers to the East will encourage a flood of immigrants. Christian Democrats sympathisers fear a related growth in organised crime networks throughout Germany.

Poles, Czechs, Slovaks and Russians are now a regular presence on German building sites — most are working at rates well below those fixed by trade unions. Garden gnome manufacturers, even coffin builders, are all complaining about Polish competition. Farmers are nervous, too, that the whole agricultural subsidy system of Europe will crack if Central European states are admitted.

Finally, there is an anxiety about Russia, especially among the older generation. Moscow's warnings about admitting the Central Europeans quickly to the Union seem to be making the most impact in Germany.



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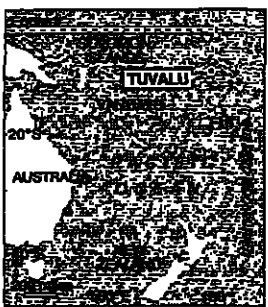
Islanders' passion for Britain is flagging

By Eve-Anne Prentice
and Our Foreign Staff

TUVALU, the tiny group of Pacific islands which won independence from Britain in 1978, feels so unloved by London that it plans to remove the Union Jack from its flag and may drop the Queen as head of state.

Whitehall was unaware yesterday of the discontent, perhaps because Timothy David, the British High Commissioner to Tuvalu, who is also Ambassador to Fiji, lives hundreds of miles away in Suva, the Fijian capital.

Tuvalu's parliament is due to vote on the Union Jack proposal today. In Funafuti, the capital, Kameta Laatasi, the Prime Minister, said that he wanted to change the flag to show the country's dis-



pleasure with Britain. Tuvalu, formerly the Ellice Islands, has a population of 9,900 living on 10.36 square miles at a maximum of 16ft above sea level.

With sea level rising, the islands want to send some people to Australia and New Zealand, both of which have refused. Mr Laatasi said that he would go through the ritual of asking Britain, but he knew it would be a waste of time. "Even though we still have a Westminster system of government and retain the Queen as our Queen, nobody cares about us," he said.

Asked if removal of the Queen as head of state would be next, he said: "If the Union Jack goes from the flag, that's the first step."

Clinton's key counsellor set to quit office

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

IN another blow to his Administration, President Clinton is about to lose his wisest, most experienced adviser and the sole member of his Cabinet with the stature to handle the new Republican Congress.

Administration sources yesterday confirmed rumours that Lloyd Bentsen, 73, was preparing to resign soon as Treasury Secretary. A Treasury official denied that he had submitted a resignation letter, but reports that he intended to resign.

Mr Bentsen's replacement probably would be Robert Rubin, 57, a former banker who heads Mr Clinton's National Economic Council. Mr Rubin is highly regarded and generally shares Mr Bentsen's conservative economic views, but in a real sense Mr Bentsen is irreplaceable.

The tall, silver-haired Texan, who was his party's vice-presidential candidate in 1988, had spent 22 years in the Senate before joining the Clinton Administration, the last six of them as head of the powerful Finance Committee.

He knows Robert Dole and the Republicans' new congressional leaders better than anyone else in this Administration and offers Mr Clinton a

unique perspective on what will or will not "fly" on Capitol Hill. His advice has not always been taken — he had issued a warning that Hillary Clinton's hugely ambitious healthcare reforms would be rejected — but his subsequent vindication has merely enhanced his authority.

Mr Bentsen has also been something of a father figure to the President, offering much blunter counsel than younger aides could. After the 1992 budget battle he told Mr Clinton he had to slow down. "Mr President, you want to make every decision. You can't. You've got to delegate more," he said. "It's not the quantity of your decisions. It's the quality. I watch your eyes fog over. You're gone. It's because you're tired. You think you can go without sleep. You can't."

The reasons for Mr Bentsen's decision were unclear yesterday, but almost certainly they were connected with the Republicans' takeover of Congress. Last summer this partisan figure was forced to give evidence about his department's role in the alleged Whitewater cover-up and he certainly would not want to endure that ordeal again when the new Republican

majority, armed with subpoena powers, reopens that issue next year.

Mr Bentsen also completed a hat-trick of solid achievements last week when he helped to secure congressional approval of the GATT world trade pact. He had played a key role earlier in achieving a big deficit-reduction package and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Recently he bought a \$1 million (£650,000) home in Houston, where his six grandchildren live.

Compounding Mr Clinton's problems, Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater special prosecutor, was expected to announce last night that Webster Hubbell, the President's closest Arkansas friend and former Associate Attorney General, had agreed to cooperate fully with his investigation. In return, Mr Starr would drop all but two criminal charges against Mr Hubbell, who has been accused of billing his old Rose Law Firm and its clients for several hundred thousand dollars in false expenses.

Mr Hubbell, a close associate of Mr and Mrs Clinton for years, would almost certainly know if the Whitewater allegations are true.

Gingrich says White House staffed by ex-drug abusers

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

NEWT GINGRICH was formally elected the next House Speaker yesterday as he was attacked for saying that White House staff included numerous former drug abusers.

Dee Dee Myers, President Clinton's spokeswoman, denounced Mr Gingrich's allegation, which exploited a stereotype of this Administration as a stronghold of trendy young liberals scornful of mainstream America.

"He offered no evidence to support his reckless charges. He offered no facts. He offered no names," Ms Myers said.

All White House employees were tested and asked whether they had used drugs in the previous five years as part of the FBI's security clearance, she added. They were subject to random drug tests.

Leon Panetta, the White House Chief of Staff, accused Mr Gingrich of behaving like an "out-of-control radio talk show host" and said it would be impossible to do business with a Speaker who hurled around such unfounded allegations. Mr Gingrich made the accusation during a television interview in which he

sought to explain why he had recently accused Mr and Mrs Clinton of being "counter-culture McGoverniks" and "enemies of the people".

The Republican claimed to have been told by a senior law enforcement official that "up to a quarter of the White House staff, when they first came in, had used drugs in the last four or five years". Mr Gingrich also said that "counter-culture people" were "scattered throughout this Administration". He admitted that he had smoked marijuana as a student.



Lloyd Bentsen giving evidence to the Senate Banking Committee in August this year on the Treasury Department's involvement in the Whitewater affair

Harvard exhausts top scholar

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN NEW YORK



Rudenstine: suffering from acute exhaustion

PRESIDING over American universities is no longer the peaceful job it once was, as the President of Harvard University can attest after being placed on indefinite medical leave to recover from acute mental and physical exhaustion.

Three years after he took up one of the most important academic posts in America, Neil Rudenstine, 59, is suffering from severe fatigue and his doctors say that he should cease all official duties. A Renaissance scholar with degrees from Oxford, Princeton and Harvard, Dr Rudenstine is a workaholic, but his colleagues say his sudden col-

lapse reflects the strain of running an organisation larger than most modern corporations, and rather more rebellious.

The president of an American university must combine day-to-day administration with the increasing demands of fundraising, public appearances and government regulation, while balancing competing interest groups and obeying the strictures of political correctness. Where the job was once considered a calm and dignified appointment for life, most university presidents now last between three and seven years before bowing out, exhausted.

US plans elimination of napalm

New York: The US Navy plans to eliminate its stocks of napalm, the weapon that symbolised the Vietnam War (Ben Macintyre writes). More than 10,000 tons will be removed from a weapons base in California and used as fuel for producing cement.

Shooting spree

Melbourne: A man with financial problems sprayed a Melbourne suburb with bullets, killing one woman through the window of her home and a man in his car, before police shot him dead. (Reuters)

Libyan freed

Paris: French authorities freed Ali Omar Mansour, a Libyan national, held in an investigation into the 1989 bombing of a French DC10 airliner in which 171 people died. (Reuters)

Fire deaths

Peking: A burning newspaper thrown on a sofa by a party guest started a fire last month that killed 233 people in a dance hall in northeastern China, the Yangcheng Evening News said. (Reuters)

Egypt killings

Assist: Police killed a suspected Muslim militant and arrested eight in Bani Shakir, a southern Egyptian village. In a separate incident, a policeman was shot dead near Mallawi. (Reuters)

Seeger award



New York: Pete Seeger, 75, the folk singer once considered a political subversive by the US Government, was presented with a Kennedy Centre Honours award by President Clinton.

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Kaunda launches comeback bid 'to save Zambia'

By EVE-ANN PRENTICE, DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

KENNETH Kaunda, the white kerkchief-wielding former President of Zambia and "Father of the Nation" for nearly 30 years, has launched a campaign to return to power three years after he was defeated in the country's first multi-party elections since 1968.

Dr Kaunda, who once danced with Margaret Thatcher and years later accused her of "kissing apartheid", is believed to be backed by his old friends in the African National Congress in South Africa.

The former Zambian leader, who was defeated by Frederick Chiluba, a trade union leader, in the 1991 elections, has been telling crowds at a series of political rallies: "I am back. There is a crisis in Zambia. The country can break into pieces unless we do something about it." Dr Kaunda, 70, resigned from the leadership of his United National Independence Party a year after his defeat, and the party is divided about whether to let him use it again as his platform. According to *Africa Analysis* he "is likely to form his own party and most UNIP members and many key opposition figures would probably follow him".

Eric Silwamba, Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services, said in London yesterday: "The man is trying to get back into politics. It is understood that he has the support of Nelson Mandela and the ANC."

Patrick Smith, editor of *Africa Confidential*, said: "The Government is fairly

divided by the emergence of ethnic politics in Zambia. One of Kaunda's few achievements was to form a consensus in politics. Under Chiluba, people have retreated to ethnic laagers and this has prompted Kaunda to act. There has also been tension about South African goods flooding into Zambia."

Dr Kaunda was a national hero when he swept to power after independence from Britain in 1964. But by the mid-1970s the world price of copper, Zambia's main export, had collapsed and the once-booming economy began to decline. Economic woes worsened when Dr Kaunda cut off relations with Rhodesia and offered a haven to Joshua Nkomo's guerrillas.

The teetotal, vegetarian son of a Malawian Church of Scotland pastor was also dogged by family problems in the later years of his 27-year



Kaunda has backing of Mandela and ANC

presidency. One of his six sons, Masuzyo, died of Aids and another, Kambarage, was convicted of murder after a woman was shot during a brawl. Kambarage was later cleared by the Supreme Court.

Zambia is due to hold its next presidential election in October 1996, but campaigning will begin in earnest in the New Year. Dr Chaloka Beyani, of the Refugee Studies Programme at Oxford University, said: "I think his chances are stronger than at the last election, but he will have difficulty winning. People are fond of him, but they feel he belongs to the past." Dr Kaunda encouraged ANC exiles to establish their main base in Lusaka during the apartheid years.

In the latest sign of Zambia's economic plight, the Government at the weekend closed the country's small national airline, deciding against a rescue attempt after Western donors objected and threatened to withhold aid. Godfrey Miyanda, the Vice-President, blamed bad management for Zambia Airways' financial crisis. He said the Government was not prepared to bail out the airline that it had subsidised since nationalisation in 1979. The airline's 1,300 workers will be laid off.

Zambia Airways, which in the past survived on huge subsidies given by Dr Kaunda's government, sold its aircraft in 1989 and has since flown leased ones, some costing £320,000 a month while the company made only £160,000 a month.



Ben Phillips, between public school and Oxford, is feeling at home with the Marabe family near Pretoria

Township life entrances Briton

FROM MICHAEL HAMLYN IN MAMELODI

BEN Phillips, 18, fresh from St Paul's School (£2,595 a term) in central London, is living in this black township ten miles from Pretoria, among some of the poorest and most disadvantaged people in the world.

The idea of a white person living in a black township makes many in South Africa wince. When his presence, working on a church education project, was reported in a local newspaper, it was enough to elicit excited comment from radio commentators. White South Africans do not go to black townships if they can help it. Foreigners who do go get reminded about what happened to Amy Biehl. An American exchange student,

she was killed by a crowd of Pan Africanist Congress supporters this year in Gugulethu, outside Cape Town.

Ben is unfazed. "The perception of white South Africans is that townships are places of danger, but I've come back home late at night, drunk, I walked about the township, I've ridden in taxis while there is supposed to be a taxi war going on. If this were South Central Los Angeles I would be worried, but it isn't."

The young Englishman has found an exotic way of filling in the year between his A-levels (four A grades) and New College, Oxford. His welcome in Mamelodi has been ecstatic. He is constantly greeted, and answers in fluent Sotho. He has joined the local African National Congress branch. He lives in the house of a colleague, Chris Marabe,

24, sharing the family's meals of maize-flour porridge, known as pap, and boerewors (sausage).

The only time Ben has felt in danger was when he went into the white areas with Mr Marabe. One day, four white men jumped on him and started to search him. Only halfway through the operation did they explain that they were police, and that he was suspected of being a drug dealer.

"I was angry," he said. "Because I was white, and living in Mamelodi, therefore I was a drug dealer." He added: "What I would like to do is to send a message South Africa is not a dangerous place. Please invest your money here. It would be a shame if the Thatcher prediction, that people will not invest here because it is too insecure, came true."

Chinese dissident sues Peking for police harassment

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG

A LEADING Chinese dissident is suing the Peking government for violating his human rights.

Wang Dan, the most wanted "counter-revolutionary" student after the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstration in June 1989, accused the Peking Public Security Bureau yesterday of "invading my right to privacy and hampering my right to personal freedom".

Jailed for almost four years after the Tiananmen protest was brutally crushed by the army, Mr Wang, now 25, was released on parole in February last year. He has since been under surveillance and detained for short periods, but he

hours of questioning. He had been held for 12 hours a few days earlier after police seized him during an interview with an American reporter and told him to stop complaining about the surveillance.

Chinese courts have the discretion to throw out such cases and normally do when political sensibilities are at stake. Two years ago, Wang Meng, a writer who briefly served as Culture Minister until the Tiananmen massacre, tried to bring a defamation case against an official who criticised one of his short stories as "subversive", but was denied a hearing.

Wang Dan holds out little hope that his case will be allowed to proceed, but he asked the legal authorities "to allow me to see at least a tiny amount of respect for the law".

Official action against Chinese dissidents and critics has increased recently. At the weekend, severe new limitations on publishing were introduced, including a ban on writing which makes "political mistakes." Last week, the poet Bei Dao, who fled China to the West before the massacre, returned to Peking, hoping to see his ill father and young daughter.

But after police interrogation at the airport about his political contacts in America, he was refused entry and put on a plane back to the US. Chinese officials have often stated that intellectuals living abroad are welcome to return regardless of their views, but Mr Bei claimed: "They treated me like a criminal."

Wei Jingsheng, China's most famous dissident who was released from prison in 1993 after almost 15 years, was pulled from his car by police in April and has disappeared. According to official media, Mr Wei was taken into custody for investigation of unspecified crimes. The authorities refuse to say where he is and have denounced his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.



Wang police "follow him everywhere"

says that the monitoring has increased recently, even extending to him being watched when he goes swimming.

"Especially in the past few days the police have started following me everywhere, and really close behind me so that every one of my actions is affected," Mr Wang said.

He said he was unaware of a reason for the tighter surveillance. He had not changed his daily activities and had made no attempts recently to contact foreign journalists. Police last detained Mr Wang in August, releasing him after seven

Schoolboy suicide shocks Japanese

FROM GWEN ROBINSON IN TOKYO

JAPAN'S Justice Ministry yesterday opened an investigation into the suicide of a 13-year-old boy who blamed his plight on school bullies accused of extorting thousands of pounds from him.

A ministry spokesman said school authorities in Nishio City, central Japan, would be questioned about how students at Tobu Junior High School were able to get away with the bullying for three years. Kiyoteru Okouchi hanged himself last month, leaving a four-page note saying that he was weary of the oppression he suffered at school.

Publication of the note at the weekend highlighted the brutal nature of intimidation among pupils in Japanese schools. Kiyoteru said he had stolen money from his parents in order to pay his tormentors — 11 classmates in all — a total of more than one million yen (£6,000) over three years.

He said the bullies had physically tormented him: "I was taken to a river and they forced my head under water. They did this many times... since then, I had to do as my friends told me. Why did I not die earlier? Because my family was so nice. It was easy to forget what happened at school. But these days, they bully me so much and demand such large sums of money, although I have none. I can't stand it anymore."

After publication of the note, a newspaper revealed that an 11-year-old boy from the same school had hanged himself in 1988. The principal of the school admitted at the weekend that the boy's teachers had known "something like bullying" was going on, but had not taken it seriously.

In Japan, where suicide has been seen traditionally as an honourable response to shame or humiliation, the suicide rate is relatively high, and it is not unheard of for students in their early teens or younger to take their lives. In 1992, 100 children under the age of 14 and 530 teenagers aged 15 to 19 were among the total 22,104 suicides.

Many of the child suicides are attributed to the excessive competitive pressures of Japan's education system. A prominent sociologist, speaking on television, said: "The real problem in Japan is that it is a conformist society. Children, in particular, badly want to be part of the group. When they are singled out for harassment, they are sometimes driven to suicide, and many, many more simply refuse to go to school."

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As the storm grows over Labour proposals for the House of Windsor, Alan Hamilton assesses the wealth of its cousins in Scandinavia

Real royalty never comes cheap

When Jack Straw suggested that the British monarchy might be improved by being stripped of its flummery and reduced to Scandinavian simplicity, as though it were one of those 1960s tubular Danish armchairs rather than a gilded rococo throne, was he perhaps a little off target?

For all their supposed egalitarianism, the Scandinavians can be quite grand, and are not short of palaces, private wealth and occasional bad behaviour. Our own Prince of Wales thinks them pompous and unapproachable, and has said so. Mr Straw would have done well to aim his sights a few hundred miles to the south, at The Netherlands.

The House of Orange is the true bicycling monarchy. Old Queens Wilhelmina and Juliana were frequently pictured astride the Raleigh, although today Queen Beatrix is more likely to arrive at state occasions in an acceptably demotic blue Ford Granada. Her down-to-earth but resolutely regal style, together with her stand on environmental and humanitarian issues and her absence of any significant constitutional powers have won the affection and respect of the majority of her subjects, to whom she is plain Trix.

Her inauguration 14 years ago provoked the worst violence ever seen on the streets of Amsterdam, but since then she has valiantly held the Dutch royal house together through a series of scandals. Her father Prince Bernhard was investigated, and not wholly cleared, of taking bribes from the US Lockheed Corporation. In this staunchly Protestant country, two of her sisters have married Roman Catholics, and one has since divorced, compounding the felony by holding radical left-wing views. A third sister is also divorced.

Trix's husband, the colourless Prince Claus, was once exposed as having briefly belonged to the Hitler Youth. He suffers from depression, which he attributes to the strain of being Prince Consort. He is unlikely to attract much sympathy from the robust Duke of Edinburgh.

Now aged 56, Trix is popular, professional and perfectly charming, but behind the bicycle clips lies a substantial infrastructure of regality. She and her family receive an indexed and tax-free annual Civil List allowance of £4.8 million, compared

with our own Queen's £7.9 million. The state provides her with a living palace at Huis ten Bosch and a working palace at Noordeinde, both in The Hague, and a ceremonial royal palace in Amsterdam. The total cost of running the Dutch throne is estimated at between £29 million and £37 million annually, compared with a figure of £50 million for our own.

Beatrix's private wealth, however, probably exceeds even that of Elizabeth II. Both are shrouded in secrecy, but Beatrix is said to be worth £2.5 billion, much of it from substantial and long-standing investments in Royal Dutch Shell. Still, Trix does not flaunt it, even if her jewellery collection includes 14 diamond crowns. She has managed with great success to keep grandeur at bay, and is rather more adept than the Queen of Great Britain at smiling in public, although our own monarch seems to be improving with age.

If anyone has a right to feel grand it is Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, given that the Danish royal house has in the past exported monarchs and consorts to thrones all over Europe, from Norway to Greece. But the Danish Government keeps such a tight rein on her reign that her consort, Prince Hendrik, was driven to go on strike in 1985, refusing to open any more hospitals until the Government gave him some pocket money.

Queen Margrethe earns an unregal salary of £3 million a year, but from that she has to maintain the interior of her palace at Amalienborg in Copenhagen. The Danish housing ministry looks after the outside, as well as her summer palace at Fredensborg. She herself owns a chateau at Caix in south-west France, where Prince Hendrik practises viticulture, and is under orders to break even.

In the league table of European private wealth, Queen Margrethe is definitely second division, with personal resources estimated at a mere £9 million. King Carl XVI Gustav of Sweden is not quite so well off for palaces. In 1981 he and his family moved out of the royal palace in central Stockholm to the more informal Drottningholm, outside the city in the middle of a public park. Both are state-owned, but the king also owns properties valued for tax last year



Pomp and palaces: a guard of honour for Prince Hendrik of Denmark (top), the royal palaces at Oslo (bottom left), Copenhagen (centre) and in Stockholm (bottom right)

at more than £6 million. The state pays him an allowance of about £2 million, from which he pays household staff. Still, he is allowed to claim child benefit.

Personally much richer is King Harald of Norway, who has a fortune, inherited from his father King Olav, estimated at £160 million and largely composed of land in Britain. He also receives a Civil List allowance of £1.9 million. And he pays VAT.

As taxpayers, we are rather more generous in the upkeep of our royal family than are the Continentals. But we have a monarch who is instantly known and recognised wherever she goes in the world, which is more than can be said for the others. It must be some sort of tribute to her that when

she arrives in some far foreign land, the locals do not speak of the Queen of Great Britain, but simply *The Queen*.

Other European kings and queens may be more meanly treated by their Governments because of some pretence at egalitarianism. They all, to a greater or lesser degree, have their infrastructure of pomp. And they all, to some degree, are personally well off.

Opponents of our own monarchy regard it as overblown and, in its present form, over. But there is no use in looking to the Continent for a slimmer, model: they all have their panoplies of kingship. Their image may be more demotic, but do we really want the Queen to turn up for her 55th public engagement of the year in a Ford Granada?

The five-star executive guide to good jails

Somewhere, there is a jail cell suitable for Americans who think they cannot live without luxury

For the white-collar criminal, the transfer from five-star hotels, 24oz steaks and aircraft upgrades to life in jail was never easy. Now, however, the Michael Milken and Leona Helmsley of the business world can consult the growing number of executive guides to prison life, and even employ a penitentiary consultant to help them to select the best addresses for serving out the sentence.

Fresh from a 33-month sentence for bribery and tax evasion, James Tayoun, formerly a long-serving Philadelphia politician, has just launched his Michelin-style guide which not only shows around the slammers, but advises on etiquette inside. For a fee, Mr Tayoun will also help the nervous executive convict-to-be to make a personal prison plan.

America, despite its reputation for unspeakably violent high security jails with three-tier cell cages, has some rather agreeable prisons for insider traders, dodgy doctors or those who omit a small section on their tax return. The best of these minimum-security open



prison camp in Dublin, California — a former army barracks surrounded by lawns and beds of daisies, clematis and marigolds. Though he was deprived of his \$3,000 toupée, and earned only \$5 a week as a part-time kitchen orderly, he at least had access to the running track, volleyball court and the *Wall Street Journal*.

Another Tayoun tip is to find a prison attached to an army or navy base. He recommends the 60-acre Seymour Johnson air force base in North Carolina. He says: "You're treated as one of the base personnel, and you have more freedom to roam around. The military do not look down on you so much, and you can eat a little better and make an extra phone call or two."

As for meals, prison dining leaves a lot to be desired everywhere. "Don't expect home cooking and get ready to eat starchy food," the executive guide comments. Mr Tayoun advises that the food is better for on-duty workers — "the cooks look after themselves" — and the queue is shorter, so fruit or salad will not yet have run out. Most prisons ban outside food parcels, but there are ways of overcoming cravings for prosciutto and espresso, as the Mafia has always known. "In one unit," says Mr Tayoun, "I saw the organised boys making sandwiches with fine loaves of Italian bread. They gave me one, and I didn't ask where or how they got it."

Convict etiquette depends on turning a blind eye to midnight feasts and much worse. Mr Tayoun tells his clients never to complain about another inmate, but to wait it out, and to stay away from any crowds that form. Assault, sexual or otherwise, is less of a risk in low-security jails. "Be courteous to the guards, but not over-friendly. Familiarity with a guard might be interpreted as a sign that you are an informer."

For executives used to frantic 12-hour working days with cellphones glued to their ears, the hours in prison can drag. Mr Tayoun advises writing a

daily journal, memoirs, starting an education project or even teaching other inmates. He spent much of his time inside drafting his book on one of the four prison typewriters.

Another Egon Ronay of the prison world is Tracy Humble, a New Orleans banker who served seven months at prison camp. He published *Federal Prison — Where Inmates Stay and Convicts Run: A Survival Guide* last year. Even in minimum security jails, he says, "you cannot keep the golf clubs," but you can bring in an inexpensive watch, a wedding ring and your dentures. Good commissaries also sell tennis balls and rackets, and down south, tabasco sauce to spice up prison fare.

Perhaps Mr Humble's most useful tip is acquiring a pair of earplugs, vital for rest and sanity. "A punishment not suspected until you arrive in jail is finding out that your 'celly' imitates a Mack truck with both manifold and muffler (exhaust) problems. Some wives may have snatched on them just to get a night's sleep."

KATE MUIR

What more satisfying job than to look after adorable children and be treated like royalty?

The lure of nannydom

I CAN quite understand why the Duchess of York has decided to make a new career for herself as a nanny. It sounds such a lovely job. Listen to this, an advertisement placed in last week's issue of *The Lady* by a precocious employer in Beckenham: "Boy (23 months) seeks live-in Nanny. Must enjoy parks, feeding ducks, music, painting, laughter... Now then, do admit, surely you can see why this particular royal duchess might be tempted to exchange a life of tears, brickbats and professional aunt sally-dom for one of ducks and giggles?"

The papers seem to think the Duchess is planning to discharge her nanny, and take over the job herself, partly in the interests of domestic economy, but chiefly to ingratiate herself with Jack Straw and the People's Party. What an implausible notion, on both counts. Not that I'd begrudge her a bit of unwontedly favourable comment: if some thing it becoming in a young woman with fewer ships to launch than formerly to keep herself out of trouble by remembering to put the maths homework in the school bag on Mondays, let them say so.

What I say, though, is that I bet she was sitting in the dentist's waiting room one day last week when her eye lit on *The Lady*. What a world of happy, relaxed households it opens up! The children are always "affectionate and sociable", or just plain "adorable", the nanny's quarters always tasteful and lavish, and the employers "professional", which in nannyspeak means blessedly absent, engaged upon lucrative but tedious work, while nanny and her charges share a laugh and a lasagne in some chic little pasta joint after *Miracle on 34th Street*.

THEY seem so deferential too, so thoroughly appreciative, these people in search of nannies. They obviously realise that nannies are wonderful people. I mean, what a treat for a girl's ego to read advertisements like this one from an arty couple living one minute's walk from the great pram promenade in Kensington Gardens: "You have previously worked with young babies and have a loving, understanding na-



MARGOT NORMAN

ture, full of confidence and good humour..."

The Duchess would do well to draw her sister-in-law's attention to that one. It sounds like just the sort of thing the Princess of Wales pays her therapists thousands of pounds to tell her, in soothing therapeutic tones. How much better to repair her self-esteem by getting somebody else to pay her — not a king's ransom, perhaps, but I'm told the desperate will go up to £350 a week, all found, weekends off and car — for demonstrating her loving nature to those whose company she most enjoys (children), in front of an appreciative audience (their

parents) who apparently mean to treat her like royalty.

If it would offend Jack Straw's stiff sense of propriety to have the mother of the next generation of heirs to the throne going out nannying, I don't suppose he would mind her staying in and doing it with other people's children while her own are at boarding school. Would planners or privy councillors be foolish enough to object to a little child-minding at Kensington Palace, if it made Her Royal Highness feel a bit more useful and a lot less miserable?

Perhaps it was reading the ads in *The Lady* that made Penny Hughes chuck in her £250,000 executive post with Coca-Cola last week in order to look after her new baby herself. Or perhaps it was writing one. Do the employers who rosy-prose them have a moment, between meetings, to ask themselves just why they are passing up the chance to do this ineffably jolly job themselves?

If the Duchess of York had any second thoughts about her decision, I bet those

comments from a self-styled friend of her departing Norland nanny dispelled them. Apparently the officious girl had once informed her employer it was time to take the princesses to school, only to be told snappily that it would be time when the boss was ready. Implication: Nanny's a saint, duchess is a shrew. Goodness, what a relaxed, happy household Romenda Lodge promises to be indeed, once the mistress of the house can behave just like anyone else during the early morning scramble without causing not only what used to be called "an unpleasantness", but also a spot of character assassination in the public prints.

JUST over 100 years ago, Emily Ward founded her Norland College for the training of "ladies as children's nurses" because she had averred, as headmistress of Norland Place school, that intellectual and physical development of her young pupils was somewhat stunted. This she put down to their having been looked after by untrained housemaids. The housemaid gave way to the Norlander, who now gives way to the duchess. Can this be progress?

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هكذا من الأصل

Caesareans have contributed greatly to reducing the tragic consequences of difficult deliveries, says Dr Thomas Stuttford

JOHN FRIEND, the consultant obstetrician and spokesman for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, is a puzzled man. He wonders just how much-publicised figures which suggested that the Caesarean section rate is still rising rapidly were obtained.

The Royal College's statistics show that the rate increased from 10 per cent of all births in 1988 to 14.5 per cent in 1992. This rise has since levelled out and a figure of 15 per cent is expected this year.

"There is no national register but our returns cover the great majority of maternity units in the country, and they do not bear out recent press reports," Mr Friend says.

The most important day in anybody's life is that of their birth. It is the occasion

How to have a safe and happy birthday

when their life can hang by a thread in a delivery ward, and is often dependent on the quick-thinking and training of those around them. Fortunately, in Britain the staff are usually well-trained, and the theatre well-equipped. A mistake at this time can easily lead to a child, who might otherwise have grown up to be an athlete, having to limp through life, or one, who might have had a glittering career at Oxford, never rising above the less academic forms at their local school.

In a tiny minority of cases there will still be couples for whom the result of

pregnancy will be a stillbirth. The warning signs that the baby has had enough of the trauma of labour can be missed all-too-easily and then, without a quick Caesarean, there is another unexplained death in utero — another case to be attributed to "cord around the neck".

A normal vaginal delivery remains the ideal, but in difficult cases of vaginal delivery tragedy becomes more likely. Doctors are now adept at estimating

pelvic size, and ultrasound allows detailed measurements of the baby. Difficult vaginal delivery — misery for the mother, damaging to the baby — can now often be avoided, but at the price of more Caesarean sections. Heroic high forceps deliveries, the nifty turning of the baby's head, or converting breech presentation to a head presentation, may well be wonderful examples of an obstetrician's art, but they can never compensate for a

baby damaged for life. Resort to Caesarean section has seldom, if ever, had anything to do with, as has been suggested, a demanding social calendar of either the mother or the doctor, but because Caesareans are now safer.

Anaesthesia has improved beyond recognition in the past 20 years, intravenous therapy is well established, the blood for transfusions is carefully screened and there is a battery of antibiotics to treat most post-operative infections. The mother is encouraged to walk early, and hence the risk of deep-

vein thrombosis is reduced. For those women who wish to be alert and to hear their baby's first cries, spinal anaesthesia is now available for suitable cases.

As Caesars become safer for mother and child it would be unforgivable if older, more dangerous procedures were still practised for no other reason than allowing a mother to have a vaginal delivery. The Caesarean rates are not excessive, as Mr Friend has shown.

In 1966 the perinatal mortality was 26.7 per thousand births, by 1992 this had been reduced to 7.7 per thousand. Looked at in another way in 19 out of every 1000 deliveries the baby today owes its life to the improvement in obstetric care in the past 30 years, of which ready access to Caesarean section has contributed much.

Ian Robertson meets Dr Lorna Wing, who has devoted herself to understanding autism

Giving sense to a life

Two mothers on a train, strangers, each with a year-old baby on her lap. One child catches sight of some sheep outside, points excitedly and looks up at his mother to make her see too. The other woman stares, desolated by a sudden realisation that something is terribly wrong: her child would never do that.

Was this how normal children reacted? Susan would not even turn round when she heard her mother come in the door; she would arch away from cuddles and not look her mother in the eye.

To this day, nearly 40 years on, Dr Lorna Wing can relive that final falling-into-place of the jigsaw of worry which had haunted the first year of Susan Wing's life. In that single momentary observation of a normal baby's social instinct, she both faced up to a great personal tragedy and simultaneously seized upon the core problem of a developmental disorder to which she would devote the rest of her life — infantile autism.

To the extent that this disorder was recognised at all in the 1950s, there was a commonly accepted but completely erroneous view that autism was a product of poor mothering — "icebox mother" was the cliché of the time. This view, propagated by psychoanalysts with little taste for scientific thinking, compounded the already considerable suffering of hundreds of thousands of parents by adding guilt to their burden.

Fortunately, Lorna and John Wing were both intelligent and scientifically-minded young psychiatrists who were able to resist such views and begin the long fight to understand and help the sufferers of this condition.

Through her epidemiological research, Dr Wing was a key figure in showing that there was a spectrum of autistic conditions of which classic autism was just one example. Her 1981 paper on Asperger's

syndrome was instrumental in bringing this part of the condition to the attention of the English-speaking world.

The autistic spectrum, including Asperger's, is a set of poorly-understood disorders caused by malfunctioning of particular parts of the brain — possibly the frontal lobes, the limbic system and the cerebellum. Genetic factors play a part: the Wings decided to have no more children after Susan. "We knew a family

or human, but to be obsessed with objects, repetitive movements, regular patterns, sameness and order. Many, but not all, have severe learning disabilities. Yet they are often uncommonly attractive and normal-looking. Some are numerically, musically or artistically gifted and can have excellent rote memories. "Dustin Hoffman was utterly brilliant in the film *Rain Man*, in his portrayal of someone with an autistic or Asperger disorder," Dr Wing says. "For instance, when he was crossing the road with his brother and the sign changed from 'Walk' to 'Don't Walk', he just stopped in the middle of the road! That's typical of the rule-bound behaviour of autistic people. That's why, if they are of normal intelligence, they will usually end up working with numbers or computers or other predictable and impersonal jobs."

People with Asperger's syndrome are more often of normal intelligence, yet they show the same lack of a social instinct as do autistic people. In a small minority of adolescents or young adults, the lack of understanding of social rules leads to serious criminal behaviour.

This is particularly likely to occur if the condition has not been diagnosed and help not provided. These unrecognised sufferers are often subjected to merciless bullying in school. They seldom complain, but the distress they experience can lead them to retaliate in an inappropriate way.

In the course of her work, Dr Wing, now 66, has become one of the world's experts on the autistic spectrum. "Too many parents are crushed by being made to feel responsible for their child's autism," she says. "Nowadays most professionals know that autism has physical causes, but some still cling to the discredited view that autism is a purely emotional disorder. Some parents say that they get more understanding from a neighbour who has seen a television programme than from the professionals they consult."

The staff at Elliot House, the assessment centre in Bromley, Kent, which Dr Wing helps start three years ago, can offer the best available advice and evaluation of children with autistic disorders. There is no cure, but skilled specialist education can have a major impact on the ability of these children to lead as normal a life as possible. Because of the children's language difficulties, teachers must use the children's well-developed visual sense to impart ideas and concepts.

The National Autistic Society has more than 40 centers



Susan Wing aged seven: she loves music

who had three autistic children, and we weren't prepared to take the risk," Dr Wing told me. "Susan screamed incessantly at night for her first five years," says John Wing, who is a professor. "I remember we used to take turns each night to carry her round and round the kitchen table."

But it was the autistic child's aloofness which Susan's parents found hardest to adjust to — that lack of an instinct to relate to another human being which her mother so painfully acknowledged that day in 1956.

It is common for autistic children to have language difficulties, to be very clumsy, to avoid eye contact, to show no interest in anything social



Dr Lorna Wing: "Too many parents are crushed by being made to feel responsible for their child's autism"

throughout the country offering a variety of care and advice for the several hundred thousand sufferers.

"We're taking Susan to the *Nutcracker* this Saturday: she adored *Carmen* last Christmas," Dr Wing says. "She loves all music, opera and operetta: give her a snatch of any song from any Gilbert and Sullivan production and she will name the work immediately."

at that very faculty which makes us most human — the ability to construct meaning out of experience. Yet Dr Wing shows us clearly how meaning can be constructed around these lives, given a proper understanding, the right

environment and resources.

• The National Autistic Association, 376, Willesden Lane, London NW2 5RB, tel 081 451 1114. The Centre for Social and Communication Disorders, Elliot House 113 Masons Hill, Bromley, Kent, BR2 9HT 081 466 0988.

Patients who miss the message

Health education leaflets in surgeries are ignored

HAVE you ever wondered why the typical doctor's waiting room is plastered with posters and littered with leaflets urging a healthier lifestyle? The same question occurred to Kevin Jones while he was a senior lecturer in general practice at Southampton University.

Most doctors assume that the time and effort put into health promotion in the waiting room is appreciated by patients, or if not appreciated, at least justified by results. But a survey of the medical journals revealed that nobody had ever studied the question.

A collaborative research project was launched between the university and a local general practice which took particular pride in producing an attractive and regularly changing display of health promotion material in its waiting room. They had four noticeboards, and a table with leaflets on more than 20 medical subjects.

Posters and leaflets about alcohol, road safety, healthy eating and dentistry were displayed as single themes and in combination; and 330 patients completed questionnaires asking them what they had remembered. The results of this survey have recently been published in the international journal *Family Practice*.

Very few people admitted to having looked at the noticeboards, and even fewer remembered what they had seen. Less than a quarter could recall anything at all about health promotion. The more topics on display, the lower was the impact. Only eight leaflets were taken away, and just a small minority of patients had read one while waiting. Half the people read a magazine, a third had a chat, and 43 patients did nothing.

It seems that the public is not interested in being bombarded with educational messages while waiting to see the doctor. The health promotion impact was apparently very slight. The implication was that resources expended in displaying posters and leaflets were largely wasted. A change of attitude might be in order.

DR JONES and his colleagues point out that the main purpose of a waiting room is to provide a welcoming, friendly and calm atmosphere for patients. Decoration should contribute to a pleasant ambience, not to a guilty conscience.

General practitioners may wish to reconsider whether it is appropriate to use their waiting patients as a captive audience. Any necessary health promotion should perhaps take the form of a conversation between the doctor and the individual patient, rather than an undifferentiated onslaught by the impersonal medium of print.

DR BRUCE CHARLTON

• The author is a lecturer in Public Health Medicine at Newcastle University.

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The thistle and the crown

Magnus Linklater on the talk of constitutional changes

Both major parties have now put the British constitution at the centre of the political stage. By raising the future of the monarchy on last night's *Panorama*, Jack Straw was signalling that Labour is prepared to take the public temperature on a hitherto forbidden subject. And last Friday, in his speech to the Conservative Women's Conference in London, John Major chose an issue on which he believes Labour to be acutely vulnerable: its whole-sale plans to reform the constitution, the House of Lords and the government of Scotland.

At first sight, it seems that Mr Major has made the safer choice. To question the role of the Queen would appear to be electoral madness. Despite all the hostile publicity about the royal family, polls still put public support for a hereditary rule of state at around 70 per cent, and disapproval of royal antics has done little to undermine affection for the Queen herself. But in the long run, Labour may not be too wide of the mark. Mr Straw's view, endorsed apparently by his leader, is that progress should be made towards a monarchy which would act as the "figurehead of a classless society", rather than the "apex of a hierarchical system". His argument is that if the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords is to be removed as Labour plans, then the role of the monarch must be redefined.

A reduced monarchy has increasing appeal

Mr Straw and Mr Blair believe that this is tactically the best time for a debate, rather than closer to the election, when Labour could be vulnerable to charges of attacking the national identity. Support for the traditional role of the Royal Family is steadily declining, and the Scandinavian model — once so derided — is becoming more attractive. Such a monarchy would be cheaper, more modest, and perhaps closer to the people. Whether it is wise to take on a fundamental review of Labour's own constitution while at the same time dismantling that of the United Kingdom is another matter.

Mr Major, on the other hand, is risking the ire of the Scots. He has thrown down the gauntlet by attacking Labour's far-reaching plans to introduce a Scottish parliament, and he has chosen the tactics of ridicule to do so. His rhetoric has not gone down well north of the border — and not surprisingly when one looks at the key passage in his speech: "It might be fun to chat at a bistro and treat our constitution like an after-dinner parlour game," he said. "But to approach an honoured, cherished, working, living, breathing balance of responsibilities between peoples as though it were some sort of Meccano set — that's a sort of teenage madness."

He added: "It's time Labour realised that what they are talking about isn't some kind of theoretical discussion by a couple of Fabians in Hampstead. You can't shake our constitution around as if it

were a cocktail at an Islington dinner party."

I don't know if there are still Fabians in Hampstead or whether they shake cocktails at Islington dinner parties these days. But I can say that language of this sort does not travel well. To Scots in particular, John Major seemed to be saying: "You people who are talking about irrelevant plans such as a Scottish parliament are no better than the chattering classes."

The Prime Minister may be right to choose this as a fighting issue, but he shows poor judgment if he turns it into a slur on the Scots. The fact is that around three-quarters of Scottish voters consistently support the idea of a Scottish parliament.

The logic of Mr Major's decision is clear: at the last election both he and his Secretary of State, Ian Lang, campaigned on a robust defence of the union, and both believe it helped to hold the Tory line in Scotland and even won back a couple of seats. I would not be so sure. I believe that the tax issue which gained votes for the Conservatives in England was just as helpful in Scotland. And Mr Lang was always careful, in speaking up for the union, to avoid ridiculing the views of those who genuinely believe in the idea of devolution. They include, after all, large numbers in his own party.

On both arguments, ground which was once solid is beginning to shift. In recent weeks, support for a review of the monarchy has come from sources as diverse as *The Economist*, the public accounts committee and Labour peers. Even the Prince of Wales has admitted (to Jonathan Dimbleby) that there appear to be too many members of the Royal Family, with too much public money spent on them.

Equally, in Scotland, where it was once axiomatic that business and industry were implacably opposed to any separate parliament, there have been overtures to Labour on the subject. The Governor of the Bank of Scotland, Bruce Patullo, has said that the time has come for a dialogue about the form that such a body might take and what its powers would be; other leading businessmen, once seen as enemies of devolution, have begun to lower their guard. Nevertheless, Labour has an enormous task ahead if it is to answer those questions, and to explain how a Scottish parliament would relate to Westminster and how much it would cost.

But progress is being made. While Mr Major was making his speech describing the "teenage madness" of promoting a Scottish parliament, a gathering was taking place in Edinburgh of the Constitutional Convention, the body charged with coming up with a workable scheme. The building in which it chose to meet was the Royal High School, where a Scottish parliament would sit. I have to report that I could not spot a single teenager, let alone a mad one.



CLUTCHING AT STRAWS

Don't bait the Bear

Anatol Lieven says Nato expansion is predicated on a non-existent threat

When justifying the expansion of Nato into Eastern Europe in conversations with their Russian colleagues, Western diplomats often seem to work on the principle that the Russians are blind and deaf, or at least incapable of reading the American newspapers.

When the North Atlantic Assembly advocated an eastward expansion of Nato, anyone at all familiar with Moscow's thinking could have told the West what Boris Yeltsin's reaction would be. Yesterday, he exploded in calculated fury at the European security conference, but still seemed to take the Western delegates by surprise.

The idea of expanding Nato is to strengthen democracy in Eastern Europe and deal with ethnic problems. But Nato has so far been strikingly unsuccessful in dealing with such internal problems as the current chauvinist excesses of Greece, while the candidates for Nato membership in the near future, Poland and the Czech Republic have no significant national minorities or territorial disputes with neighbours. Slovakia and Hungary do have such problems, but so far their behaviour has been satisfactorily moderated by Western diplomatic influence coupled with the promise of steady integration into the European Union if they behave.

This official Nato line is mainly a red herring. The real point of Nato expansion is to contain an alleged threat from Moscow. This always was the point of Nato, and the alliance has not been able to formulate any convincing alternative *raison d'être*. Moscow knows this. At the least, this expansion, as Polish and other Eastern European leaders wish, means extending the Western defence shield to protect Eastern Europe. At most, as proposed by Zbigniew Brzezinski and Jesse Helms (the former foreign relations committee chairman of the US Senate), it means extending Nato into the former Soviet Union itself. One of Helms's leading advisers, Steven Berry, called for the "encirclement" of Russia with pro-American states, so as "to make certain Russia remains on a democratic course".

Quite apart from totally misreading the Russian character and political situation, this is not a defensive but an offensive strategy. It is a counter-attack, but a counter-attack against a Russian attack which is not

taking place. And while no one would deny that a future Russian administration might attack Ukraine and the Baltic states, Nato expansion at present would make imperialism more popular in Moscow, not less.

Pro-Western Russian diplomats and democratic politicians all say that Nato expansion would weaken their position and strengthen that of their chauvinist enemies. The Russian military sees it as both a direct military challenge and a breach of the spirit of the 1990 Nato agreement not to expand into eastern Germany.

In the words of a Swedish diplomat, "there is a chance that we will see a chauvinist and imperialist Russia in the future; but we should not go out of our way to encourage its growth. All this talk of expanding Nato risks producing exactly the development we don't want to see. It may happen anyway for internal Russian reasons, but it shouldn't happen because of us."

There are no issues at present over which the vital interests of Russia and Nato come into conflict. Whenever Russia takes a contrary position to some Nato members over a particular question, it can be sure of finding others largely on its side.

Thus in Bosnia, Russia is not Nato's enemy but Nato's ally; if Russia had not existed, then Britain and France would have had to invent it as an excuse for their cowardice and indecision. In my view, Nato should intervene decisively in Bosnia, but if so it should try to preserve its relations with Moscow by compromising on other issues. In particular, since there is in any case no present reason for Nato expansion, we should promise not to extend Nato into Eastern Europe as long as Russia does not bring direct military pressure to bear on its neighbours in the west of the former Soviet Union.

So far, such military pressure has not occurred. The Yeltsin administration has withdrawn its forces from

the Baltic states, promised to withdraw them from Moldova, and begun to scale them down. It has guaranteed Ukraine's existing borders and discouraged Russian nationalists in the Crimea from attempting secession. Moscow's policy here has contributed greatly to the collapse of the immediate secessionist threat in Crimea. Russia does indeed continue to claim most of the Black Sea fleet, but then two years ago this claim was strongly endorsed by American diplomats.

In the Caucasus and Central Asia, Moscow has acted to preserve its hegemony, but far from threatening Western interests, much of the time this has actually served them. Russia may have backed Armenia against Azerbaijan, but so does much of Western public opinion. Moscow opposes an Azerbaijani oil export pipeline through Iran, but so does the United States. Moscow fights against an Islamic-tribal alliance in Tajikistan, but many Western diplomats also see this as generally in the West's interest. And finally, while a vague desire for Russia to play a "great power" role is universal in Russian society, opinion polls show that even Zhirinovskys supporters generally oppose specific military involvements in which Russian conscript soldiers are likely to be killed.

The will simply does not exist in Russia for a programme of imperial expansion. As for a Russian military threat to Poland and Eastern Europe either now or in the foreseeable future, this is no more than fantasy. If Zhirinovskys or someone like him does come to power, then Nato should certainly be expanded, but everyone who knows the state of the Russian economy and armed forces knows that even in this case Russia will be in no position to bring pressure to bear on Eastern Europe. If, however, the expansion of Nato is intended to strengthen not Eastern Europe but Ukraine and the Bal-

tic states, then the results could be exactly the opposite. In Washington last week, Leonid Kuchma, the President of Ukraine, argued explicitly against expansion, warning that it would infuriate Russia and could split his country down the middle between east and west.

As for Russia's likely reaction, Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the parliamentary foreign relations committee, a centrist who was once ambassador to Washington, told deputies this month that if Nato expands into Eastern Europe, Russia will have to take steps to ensure its security in the Baltic and will feel obliged to turn the Commonwealth of Independent States into a real military alliance. This would obviously involve much greater pressure on Ukraine to accept Russian domination. Russian diplomats have also said that it might end any hope of future Russian co-operation with the West in problem areas such as Iraq or North Korea. The UN Security Council would once again become paralysed.

All these risks, however, are unnecessary. Far from being drawn back into Russia's orbit, Eastern Europe and the Baltic states are coming closer to the West, culturally and economically, with every day that passes. There are even encouraging signs of Ukraine reforming economically with Western help, so reducing the threat of internal upheaval in Russia. Progressive integration into the European Union will calm most of the security concerns of these countries without risking any counter-attack from Moscow, which actively favours EU expansion.

This is the rational way for the West to proceed. Expansion of Nato, by contrast, has never been rationally considered at all. Rather, it has been spontaneously generated out of a murky stew of unreconstructed Western cold warriors, historically obsessed East European lobbyists, and Western diplomats, desperate after their failure in Bosnia, to show that Nato is still alive and active.

This is not to say that talk of expansion should simply be halted. It could prove a useful lever in negotiations with Moscow over Bosnia if the West ever does decide to act there. But unless Moscow actually moves against its Western neighbours, there is no reason for any Nato expansion.

In Bosnia, Russia is not the West's enemy but its ally

sofa, it presently belongs to the orchidaceous model Yasmin Le Bon.

Spook ship

THE former Booker prize chairman and husband of Iris Murdoch may not have written a novel for 40 years before this year's *Alice*, but John Bayley is razor-sharp on topicality.

For his novel features the Achilles Lauro several times, though it was written months before the vessel's latest disaster. The ship sails into Sorrento harbour and lurks menacingly as a backdrop to the frolics of his two lesbian heroines as they go swimming.

"I first saw the ship when I was on holiday in Sorrento, gliding silently into harbour," says the writer. "I had such a strong feeling that it was sinister and doomed; I suppose it was a premonition."

Mighty fallen

SIR ISAIAH BERLIN was sporting the mother of all bandages on his venerable head at the bi-annual All Souls Founder's Feast in Oxford on Saturday. But the damage, I am told, could have been much worse, had it not been for the prompt action of two leading society ladies.



Berlin: a rare slip

Marigold Johnson, wife of the right-wing polemicist Paul, was walking down a marble staircase with Lady Gowrie and the eminent philosopher last week when Berlin slipped and hurtled down to the bottom. "He grabbed my handbag which slowed him down a bit," says Mrs Johnson. "and then Lady Gowrie found some Kleenex at the bottom of her handbag and we mopped him up. He was jolly brave but they really must put a rail up."

P.H.S

It could still be suicide

George Gardiner deplors the Cabinet's tactics

The Conservative Party has been brought to the brink of disaster. Tonight we shall peer again down the abyss. By tomorrow, the challenge will face every Tory MP: how can we pull the party back and produce government in which our own grassroots members, and the nation, can have confidence?

We have to start by analysing the strategy that led to this dire situation. The fact is that this crisis is entirely of the Cabinet's making. We always knew that legislation to make our taxpayers stump up more to finance the ambitions of the European Commission would never be endorsed by all Tory MPs. But whatever could have led the six ministers at supper in Downing Street on Remembrance Sunday to conclude that to get the Bill through they had to make it an issue of confidence, on which the Government itself would stand or fall?

They knew they had the support of the nine Ulster Unionists, and that without the vote being made a confidence issue the 23 Liberal Democrats would have been with them too, as they generally were in the Maastricht votes.

It would have required a very hefty Tory rebellion to outvote such a formidable combination: some 35 voting against, or 70 abstentions. It would take a fevered mind to think such numbers even possible. The Government would have got its Bill, and the question of a confidence vote next day — or any day — need never have arisen. So why did the ministers panic and sign a suicide pact?

It was like the near-suicidal "paving motion" on the Maastricht Bill. There was no need then to couch it in such make-or-break terms, or to put the Prime Minister's credibility on the line. In the event — with a little help, I recall, from me — John Major survived with a majority of just three. That too was an exercise in machismo that backfired.

To comprehend all this, one has to dig deep into the psychology of fear that seems to pervade Downing Street. I often wonder whether the Prime Minister's advisers were reared on an unrelieved diet of Grimms' Fairy Tales, and now see black witches and horrid goblins around every tree-trunk.

Quite apart from the suicide pact, another example of this fearfulness came to light on that black Monday, when it emerged that the Prime Minister had been led to believe that John Carlisle (who was voting in support of the Government) had been colluding with the Labour whips. Now we all know that Carlisle can be an awkward cuss at times, but anyone suggesting he could ever operate in that manner needs an early appointment with a psychiatrist.

Again, I was recently amazed to read a virulent attack on me and 11 colleagues on the leader page of a Conservative tabloid. The allegations hinged on a briefing given by "one of the Prime Minister's most senior allies", according to the author. I was able to rebut all these allegations, but never in my long experience has such poisonous bile been directed by a so-called ally of the Prime Minister against backbench supporters.

So did some of those who urged John Major to make Monday's vote one of confidence have an ulterior motive — such as humiliating the Euro-sceptics or driving as many of them as possible out of the party? I prefer to think that the suicide pact was simply an act of collective lunacy. Either way, until such paranoia is driven from the length of Downing Street, the party is unlikely to make good the damage.

The eight rebels who had the party whip withdrawn on Monday night must be brought back into the fold as quickly as possible. That a Government should by such tactics end up wiping out its paper majority is almost beyond belief.

The most senior of the rebels is Sir Teddy Taylor. So far as I can recall, his only real dispute with the Government has been over British membership of the European Community. For 30 years, no less, he has fought hard for Conservative policies at Friday and Saturday night meetings for Tory associations all over the country, and in by-election campaigns too. That such a figure should have the Conservative whip withdrawn is an outrage, and will not be understood by a great many of our remaining party workers.

It is also necessary for us to stop tearing ourselves apart over our future in the European Union. I do not wish to fight the Maastricht battle all over again, but I recall how that split the party at every level — at Westminster, within local associations and among our business supporters. Whether we should move closer politically also divides the nation.

To expect one party somehow to transcend such deep differences is to demand the impossible. The Conservative Party cannot do it, and neither could the Labour Party if it were in office. The obvious solution is to make a commitment to a national referendum on whether to ratify the product of the negotiations at the Inter-Governmental Conference in 1996. If John Major cannot do this soon, then I fear the Conservative Party will break under the strain.

Sir George Gardiner is Conservative MP for Reigate.

Best of 800

WHILE Labour talks of abolishing the voting rights of hereditary peers, Conservatives in the House of Lords are busy reforming already. They are examining means of restricting the number of peers who can vote on legislation.

The plan would be to restrict the number of hereditary peers with voting rights to about 100. This would discount most of the peers who have inherited their titles and who prefer to while away their time in tweeds on their country estates.

"It does offend people to see these peers yanked off grouse moors or out of boardrooms on a three-line whip to save the Government," explains my expert in the House, Viscount Cranborne, the blue-blooded Conservative leader in the Lords, who is examining the options. He will most probably try to institute a ballot each year, allowing all 800 hereditary peers to choose 100 of their number to retain the vote.

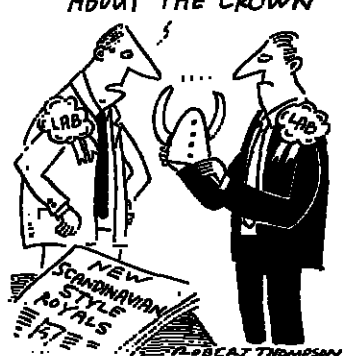
John Major has already sanctioned the study of various possible reforms of the Lords, and I understand he is taken with the idea of a ballot, first mooted by Viscount Whitelaw.

Labour's few hereditary peers, is unimpressed, however. "They're just trying to steal Labour policies, and they're not doing it properly."

Modest Roy

ROY HATTERSLEY, that learned light of the Labour Party, has pulled another rabbit out of his journalistic hat. Radio 4 has signed up Hattersley for his own series, along the lines of *The Bann Tapes*.

MM... NOT SURE ABOUT THE CROWN



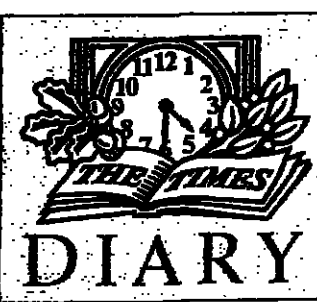
Hattersley suggests, however, that his reportage will be rather more self-effacing than Benn's modest account of his achievements. "The intention is to amuse, not to convert anyone to socialism — and certainly not to say what an important figure I was."

The first six programmes will take him from boyhood in Sheffield to his entry into the Cabinet in 1976, leaving plenty of scope for a second series. "These will be inconsequential stories looking into the byways and side alleys of politics — things I recall as marginally amusing," he muses.

Publicity material including a condom was sent to select friends last week by the music television channel MTV Europe to mark world Aids day. The company has followed up with a letter, which I trust has not arrived too late: "Please note that this condom was for promotional purposes only and must not be used."

Bass tactics

AN AEROPLANE screamed to a halt just before take-off last week in Brazil after a protest in the cabin by players from the City of London Sinfonia. A double bass — essential for the evening concert — was missing from the hold.



"Taxiing up the runway in São Paulo en route for Rio, an obelisk glanced out of the window and noticed the double bass being wheeled away," says a spokeswoman. "They said there wasn't room for it in the hold."

Requests that the plane be stopped came to nothing. Drastic action was needed, and the orchestra manager uttered a command: "Everyone stand up." Forsaking safety, the entire orchestra and accompanying chorists from Wells Cathedral Choir, stood up — and refused to sit down again until the pilot turned round to collect the enormous instrument. "It was a bumpy ride, but we got our double bass in the end."

Hot-blooded males will be bidding feverishly for lot 161 in Christie's fine furniture sale next week. A large 19th-century Biedermeier

هكذا من ألاس



VAT NIGHT

Tory MPs have good reasons to rebel — but this is not one

Today will be tense for the Prime Minister. By 10.15pm, he will know whether the heavy handed tactics he used to push through last Monday's vote on the European budget have protected his parliamentary majority for more than just eight days. If he is defeated on the increase in VAT on domestic fuel, then the vote of confidence he called last week and the subsequent withdrawal of the whip from his rebels will have turned out to be not mere spent ammunition but ricocheting bullets.

It is hard, however, to envisage what justification tonight's rebels will use for voting against the Government. True, the increase in the scope of VAT broke a manifesto pledge. Rebels might also complain that the gradual move from direct to indirect taxation has been accomplished by stealth. If the Government wants a more regressive tax system for ideological reasons, it should say so and explain its stance. But these are not the real reasons why MPs intend to rebel tonight.

If they were, Parliament would not have supported the rise in VAT on fuel four times already. The Chancellor has good economic arguments on his side. Given the financial position in which the Government found itself after the last general election, the imposition of VAT on fuel was both a logical and an environmentally sound way to plug the gap in the public finances that the prolonged ERM-induced recession had created. The Government's economic policy leading up to Black Wednesday may have been flawed; but we are not starting from there.

Some of the MPs who are likely to rebel tonight will do so for the worst of populist

reasons. Nicholas and Ann Winterton, for instance, seem ready to vote with the Opposition than the Government on controversial measures: it is a wonder that they still take the Tory whip. But others, including some of the Euro-sceptics who lost the whip last week, will claim that they have been freed from the constraint of unthinking party loyalty and can now vote with their conscience.

This would be to dignify their action with a specious morality. Conservatives are supposed to be in favour of sound national finances. None of the rebels has come up with an alternative source for the £1.5 billion that would be raised by the extra VAT. If they intend to vote with Labour tonight — an amendment which would simply allow the VAT rise to be debated — but to support the Government when the measure itself comes to the floor of the House, then they will be displaying the real motives behind their actions. It will then be clear that they wish simply to discredit and weaken John Major, to wreck their revenge on the Prime Minister for his actions last week.

This would be a cowardly, self-indulgent and pointless way to behave. Had the sceptics wanted to remove Mr Major as their leader, they should have called for a leadership challenge last Wednesday. They were not prepared to do so because they feared that any alternative leader would be even less Euro-sceptical than he. Yet they gain nothing from forcing him to limp on for at least another year, and possibly to the next election, like a bird close to death. All they will achieve is to make their party's chances of winning the general election smaller still.

A COLD PEACE

Clinton is careless, even reckless, with European security

The presidents of America and Russia, at the summit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe yesterday, left no doubt that the two powers are now seriously at odds on the security of Europe. Boris Yeltsin spoke pointedly of the "a cold peace". Bill Clinton, while insisting that the West sought "to erase old lines in Europe without drawing new ones", essentially told Russia that NATO would enlarge its membership if it wanted to do so.

The two men stood side by side as Ukraine formally renounced its nuclear status in return for American, Russian, British and French guarantees — a ceremony which finally opens the way to implementing the Start-1 treaty on cutting nuclear arsenals. But they held no meeting. Instead of using this timely opportunity to deal face to face with Mr Yeltsin on Bosnia, NATO and peace-keeping in Europe, Mr Clinton flew home. His attendance at a congressional party yesterday evening apparently took priority.

Such casualness amounts to carelessness, even recklessness. Moscow has good reason to suspect that Washington is neglecting the relationship and that it has abandoned the agreement that it would contain "no surprises, and no vetoes". America's abrupt decision to accelerate the expansion of NATO has taken even its allies by surprise, and it has thoroughly upset Moscow. Last Friday at the Security Council, Russia cast its first veto since the end of the Cold War.

It was Mr Clinton who personally urged NATO last January to offer Partnerships for Peace (PfP) to the countries of the former Soviet bloc. The idea was to delay the expansion of NATO and, instead, create a half-way house: military co-operation between East and West would thereby be increased while fears, including ancient Russian obsessions about encirclement, would have time to subside. Despite Central European grumbling, the offer was speedily snapped up by 23 countries, including

Russia. But in August, the Clinton Administration suddenly abandoned its progeny before it was well grown. Last week Washington instead put pressure on its NATO allies to speed preparations for enlargement.

The appearance of inconsistency is destabilising. It is precisely what NATO, and the West, should strive to avoid. Warren Christopher claims to have been taken aback when Andrei Kozyrev, the Russian Foreign Minister, promptly announced at NATO headquarters that Russia had decided to postpone signing agreements on military co-operation with the Alliance under its PfP. If so, he lives in a dream world. Mr Christopher's claim that Russia was "exhaustively" briefed beforehand does not ring true, since America's own allies were only informed late in the day. Nothing could have been more predictable than Russia's injured reaction — as the Americans themselves were stressing only a few months ago.

Mr Clinton may be attempting to preempt Republican election victors who see no merit in spending American treasure or effort in buttressing democracy in Russia, or even in Central Europe. This is a clumsy, even perilous, way to set about it. The only real rationale for the American about-turn is to guard against resurgent Russian imperialism, and Moscow knows it.

Fear of isolation has historically fed just such hegemonic ambitions in Moscow. Mr Yeltsin insisted yesterday that "it is too soon to bury democracy in Russia". It is certainly too soon to bury the pragmatic effort at co-operation on former Yugoslavia, nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and defence conversion, and common rules on the conduct of peacekeeping in Russia's "near abroad" — all items on the Budapest summit's agenda. The Russian President is, above all else, a nationalist. The West will not always see eye to eye with him; but that is no reason to raise his hackles without compelling cause.

TABLES OF VALUE

How schools improve performance is worth measuring

Since school league tables were first published three years ago, the most common criticism of the new transparency has been that the rankings take no account of schools' capacity to improve the performance of their pupils. A highly selective private school certainly deserves praise if more than half of its candidates obtain three A grades at A level; but so too does an inner city comprehensive which takes children with below-average literacy or English language skills and helps them obtain good GCSEs. Parents, governors and teachers have a legitimate interest in "value-added" measurements which reflect such improvement.

Gillian Shephard's announcement yesterday that the Government intends to incorporate measures of this kind into its official tables over the next four years was as welcome as it was overdue. While recognising the attractiveness in principle of "value-added" statistics, ministers have shown little enthusiasm for them in practice. Equally, many conservative educationists have dismissed the demand for "value-added" measurements as a diversionary tactic used by the left-wing education establishment to discredit the new league tables.

This may have been true three years ago. Since then, however, the demand for more sophisticated figures has spread beyond the old education establishment. The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) inquiry to which Mrs Shephard was responding was headed by Dr John Marks,

a leading traditionalist. The Government can no longer brush the question aside. As a first step, it is concentrating upon secondary schools; that should not stop efforts to plot improvements in primary education.

Finding a system on which all agree will be impossible. Instead, the Education Secretary must concentrate on finding a method of measurement which will be, in her own words, "straightforward to calculate and intelligible to parents". She is certainly right to have rejected the argument that social background should be a factor in the calculation. The purpose of value-added statistics is to identify educational improvement and the realisation of potential, rather than to treat pupils as victims.

Of the three systems suggested by the SCAA working party, two have obvious flaws. Estimating the proportion of pupils in a school achieving results which are better than expected would produce complicated results which might not be clear to parents. At the other extreme, dividing schools into three bands based on their pupils' progress would be to generalise too much. Far better to measure the performance of a specific group of children at GCSE level and then compare it to the levels they had reached at 11. It would thus be possible to judge how far each school improves performance over five years. The main drawback of this system is that it cannot be implemented until 1999. But that at least gives the Government time to get the reform right.

Labour move to schools elitism?

From the Headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School, Crosby

Sir, Apparently Mr Blair wants to choose his son's school "on the basis of what is the right school for him" (report, December 2). So do many parents in the poorer parts of Liverpool, who are able to send their sons to this school only because of the assisted places (AP) scheme, which the Labour Party wants to abolish.

Mr Blair says, "What is important, is not to be saying you are denying other people the choice that you are going to make. I would not do that." Yet this is precisely what his party is proposing to do by ending the AP scheme.

Over 150 out of the 707 boys at Merchant Taylors' School in Crosby are on full assisted places — ie, their parents have incomes below £9,352 per year. They send their sons to us because they think that we are the right school in the area for their children.

I find it odd that the Labour Party should give parents the right to choose the kind of schools they want only if they have sufficient means to make that choice effective. It is even more surprising that this right is denied where perhaps it is most needed — in the deprived inner-city areas where academic standards in comprehensive schools are at their lowest.

This is not a question of cost. Our average receipts from Government for pupils on the AP scheme are slightly less than the average cost of providing a place in the maintained sector. Nor is it a question of subsidising posh public schools. Merchant Taylors' School has always catered for boys from a wide range of backgrounds.

Eton and Harrow will continue more or less unaltered — whatever a future Labour administration decides. Merchant Taylors' School will also survive, but it will become more socially elitist; and that is something which all of us here would very much regret.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON DAWKINS, Headmaster,
Merchant Taylors' School,
Crosby, Liverpool 23,
December 2.

From Mr Adney Payne

Sir, I would much rather entrust my child's future to someone who puts the interests of his own child above that of his own political future.

Yours faithfully,
ADNEY PAYNE,
Malt House, Sygate,
Cawston, Norfolk.

Release of terrorists

From Mr Robert R. Rodwell

Sir, When Baader-Meinhof murderer Imgard Möller walked free from Lübeck jail last week you reported (December 2) a US State Department spokesman saying that "prior to this parole the United States formally reiterated to the Government of Germany its view that convicted terrorists should serve their full prison term".

What price this remaining State Department's view when, inevitably and very soon, the US federal authorities are whipped into line by Sinn Féin sympathisers to exert pressure on the British Government to release, prematurely, dozens of convicted terrorists held in jails here — all of whom have served far less time in jail than Frau Möller and many for terrorist actions no less gross?

Yours faithfully,
BOB RODWELL,
86 Shore Road,
Ballyhalbert, County Down,
December 2.

Up in arms

From Mr Hubert Chesshyre,
Chester Herald

Sir, Mrs Hart (letter, November 24) gives a succinct definition of the word "crest", but I wonder how many people will absorb it. The "pedantic priesthood in the College of Arms" (your leader of November 19) is surely justified in deploring the misuse of the word, as the error is such a basic one.

Most arms consist of a shield and a crest, and to talk about the whole coat of arms as a crest is like calling a chimney a house. Many early coats of arms (eg, those of most Oxford and Cambridge colleges) consist of a shield only, and when this is depicted on a flag or stationery it is a common error to call such items "crested". I believe the misuse originated in the 18th-century practice of engraving only the crest on small items such as spoons and forks, whilst reserving the full coat of arms for larger items like salvers.

Collections of crests alone were published at least as early as 1778 (W. Sharp) and continued right up until the last edition of *Fairbairn's Book of Crests* in 1905. It is therefore understandable that many people think a crest is the same as a coat of arms, but they are nevertheless wrong.

Yours sincerely,
HUBERT CHESSHYRE,
Chester Herald and Registrar,
College of Arms,
Queen Victoria Street, EC4,
November 26.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Effects of Anglican-Lutheran accord

From the Reverend Anthony Luckcuck

Sir, The Porvoo document on links between the Church of England and Nordic and Baltic Lutherans is important to the Church of England, but not for the reason Jonathan Clark suggests ("A Maastricht for the Church", November 28). It affirms what ecumenical conversation with the Roman Church may have obscured: that apostolic succession, the unbroken line of clergy from St Peter, must in reality always have involved communal assent as well as the transmission of orders by the laying on of hands.

So perhaps it is a timely reclamation of our right as a reformed and catholic Church to stand away from what remains of a medieval mind-set in Roman Catholicism. Also to explore possibilities of unity and order which Rome lost in the autocentric structures of medieval papacy.

Porvoo does not merely open fresh relations with the Nordic churches, and penitence towards the Methodist Church we treated so badly not long ago. It may at last also free us from the kind of ecumenical relations wherein Anglicanism must seem to dance at Rome's skirts, merely because Rome is larger and its partial view of authority and succession inevitably assumes greater prominence.

Meanwhile the Englishness of the Church of England is unlikely to be erased by such things as Porvoo. Far from removing our English character, Porvoo arguably reasserts a peculiar English independent spirit, in what we can do — and have always been able to do in ecumenism — because we are not stuck in Rome's groove.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY LUCKCUCK,
St John's Vicarage,
261 Oakdale Road,
Carlton, Nottingham.

From the Reverend Richard Kingsbury

Sir, Jonathan Clark's focus on the Porvoo document is insular in that he surveys Porvoo's vision through Anglican spectacles.

Porvoo raises as many questions about the nature of the Church for Nordic and Baltic Lutherans as it does

for the Church of England. The document reflects a consensus after years of heart-searching by Lutherans and Anglicans. Like Maastricht, it draws "hidden agenda" hobby-horses out of the woodwork in all nations involved.

The Church of England is already in full inter-communion with the Lutheran Church world-wide. Each Nordic and Baltic Lutheran church embraces as rich a diversity of traditions as in the Anglican Communion.

Porvoo strengthens Anglican-Lutheran collegiality, affirms our individual traditions and preserves the core of doctrine for the future.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD KINGSBURY,
(Anglican Chairman, Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conferences),
Caversham Rectory,
Reading, Berkshire,
November 29.

From Mr L. F. Ray

Sir, Statements by a former Anglican bishop, who did not think it necessary to accept important parts of the Creed in a literal sense, tended to bring forth the well-worn and tolerant comment that "we are a broad Church".

Dismissal of a priest who thought it unnecessary that he should believe in God elicited protests that the Anglican Church should be broad enough to accept such ideas.

When, therefore, I reached your article on November 28 under the sub-heading "... Jonathan Clark asks if the core of Anglican identity is being abandoned", I wondered what could possibly have been said or done that is so far beyond the Church's permitted tolerance that its end is now nigh.

The final sticking point, as far as I can gather, is that — if I read closely — "the title of the presbyters themselves does not have to rely on unbroken succession".

I wonder what God makes of all this — but then, he is not mentioned in the article and so is presumably not considered relevant to the discussion. Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways.

Yours faithfully,
L. F. RAY,
22 Orbital Crescent,
Watford, Hertfordshire.

Holy Grail tapestries

From Ms Glennys Wild

Sir, Art prices constantly amaze, delight, and dismay onlookers. British museum curators usually fall into the latter category, as they see objects once nominally within their financial grasp suddenly eluding them.

This was my reaction when I watched four of the Burne-Jones/Morris *Holy Grail* tapestries sell at Christie's for £842,000 on November 16 (report, November 17). Your correspondent Mr David Gould seems to have responded similarly (letters November 28), but we differ considerably in the price versus value debate.

Here at Birmingham Museum we are in no doubt at all as to the aesthetic merit of the *Holy Grail* tapestries and take some pleasure in the memory of 1980, when we added to our existing collection of four narra-

tive subjects *The Summons*, the first tapestry in the *Grail* sequence, for the then astonishing price of £116,000. Happily, numerous members of the public participated in the subsequent fund-raising appeal.

Our recent attempt to acquire at auction the only subject from the series we lack, *The Failure of Sir Lancelot*, was spontaneously supported by telephone offers of help and even by a fax from the art class of Manor Farm Community School in Walsall, so that we could "save" Sir Lancelot.

We are currently hanging all our Burne-Jones/Morris tapestries, along with associated drawings and studies, until April 2, 1995. Mr Gould would be most welcome. Maybe he might even change his mind.

Yours faithfully,
GLENNYS WILD
(Keeper, Applied Art Department),
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery,
Chamberlain Square, Birmingham.

Waste-plant energy

From Mr Ray Palin

Sir, At a time when the Government is considering the development of a national waste strategy and many local authorities are facing a scarcity of landfill capacity, the headline attached to Nigel Hawkes's article on the dioxin issue ("Incinerating waste could be a deadly danger", *Science* Briefing, November 21) could cause unnecessary anxiety.

The benefits of incinerating municipal waste using modern energy from waste plants, in terms of energy conservation, reduced greenhouse gas emission and less reliance on scarce landfill, can be obtained without giving cause for concern.

Only about 10 per cent of environmental dioxin appears to come from known sources (eg, motor vehicles, power stations, metal smelting, chemical processing/manufacturing, combustion and incineration). Municipal waste incineration was thought to account for one fifth of these man-made sources in 1989, according to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report in May 1993.

But combustion gases from waste-plant energy are now passed through highly developed clean-up equipment before being discharged to the environment. And by 1996, all municipal waste incinerators must meet strict new emission standards.

These regulatory measures will cut dioxin emissions from municipal waste incineration by 98 per cent, reducing its contribution to less than 1 per cent of known sources.

Yours faithfully,
R. C. PALIN (Director),
Energy from Waste Association,
92 Horseferry Road, SW1,
November 28.

Immunisation debate

From the Chief Medical Officer

Sir, The Director of Action for ME, Mr Nicholas Anderson, asserts in his letter of November 25 that "many are convinced that vaccines are one of the triggers" of myeloencephalitis (ME). No objective evidence to that effect has been published.

Mr Anderson claims that measles "was ... little more than a minor inconvenience" and questions the use of resources to prevent cases of congenital rubella syndrome. The reality is that congenital rubella syndrome often results in lifelong severe handicap. Before the introduction of measles vaccine about 100 children died from measles in this country each year, and WHO estimates that even now 1.25 million children die annually of measles. The measles/rubella immunisation campaign was initiated entirely at the instigation of the UK health departments.

Yours sincerely,
KENNETH CALMAN,
Chief Medical Officer,
Department of Health,
Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, SW1,
November 28.

Links between pay and performance

From Sir Alan Muir Wood,
FRS, FEng

Sir, The discussion on pay for senior executives (letters, November 23; also leading article, "Wages of greed", December 5) appears to be based on a fundamental fallacy, imported from across the Atlantic, to the potential detriment of our industrial competitiveness. I refer to the belief that essential skills are bought by the highest salaries.

The most successful organisations in the longer term recognise that salary is one among several factors which combine to provide job-satisfaction to the most productive. Other factors include mutual confidence in colleagues, two-way loyalty, personal informality superimposed on formal responsibilities, encouragement of professional satisfaction in innovation, implicit ethical standards. Stability of relationships is the objective.

Many leaders of public utilities have evidently obtained high job-satisfaction in the past. When, on privatisation, they are suddenly awarded a large increment of salary, the question has to be asked whether the increase is in compensation for a marked reduction in that satisfaction. If so, the same philosophy is likely to permeate the organisation. If not, we are seeing irresponsible extravagance by those who fail to understand the criteria for success.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN MUIR WOOD,
Franklands,
Pangbourne, Berkshire,
December 5.

Safety of tourists

From the Under Secretary of State,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir, Does Harvey Elliott ("When nannies say no to your holiday", December 1) seriously believe that the safety interests of British tourists should be placed behind those of the Gambian economy?

Our travel advice is fair and objective. It is not intended to nanny or cajole but to ensure that travellers have the best possible information on which they can then make their own decisions.

When I met tour operators recently to discuss the Gambia there was no lecturing or arm twisting. The return of tourists to the UK was based on the operators' own responsible assessment. We believe that there is a threat to the safety of British tourists in the Gambia and the FCO has an obligation to make these concerns known and will make them known.

Yours sincerely,
TONY BALDREY,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
King Charles Street, SW1,
December 1.

Hospital league tables

From Dr Vivienne Nathanson

Sir, Janet Daley's article of November 24 on hospital league tables (letters, November 26) missed an essential point. Sensitive information like patient survival rates should indeed be freely available rather than being kept on a secret list: but the comparison of such data must be between like and like.

Therein lies the difficulty. Not all patients being treated for the same clinical complaint begin at the same starting block. Some will have an unsatisfactory clinical history and others have one or more conditions which impede recovery.

Taking crude death rates at face value runs the risk of hospitals with perceived "good statistics" getting more and more patient referrals resulting in bigger waiting lists and pressures to release patients quickly to keep waiting times down. How will this improve patient care?

Yours faithfully,
VIVIENNE NATHANSON
(Scottish Secretary),
British Medical Association,
3 Hill Place, Edinburgh 8.

Stoking up

From Mrs G. Dorothy Melsome

Sir, Bella, the belle of Bell Green, who graciously permits me to share her home, wishes to endorse the opinions and fears of Mr Robert Garner's "senior cat" (letter, November 26; also letter, December 1) that the coming winter will be very cold. In this, her seventh autumn, she is eating with concentrated efficiency never previously displayed, and the normally elegant slenderness of her form has changed to voluptuous curves.

The omens are plain to feline eyes. Let mere mortals take note — and lay in a good stock of woollies.

Yours faithfully,
G. DOROTHY MELSOME,
Chiltern Edge, 2 Bell Green,
Bovingdon,
Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire,
November 27.

From Mrs Margaret Ross

Sir, This warm winter weather leads me to think that the Lord might not be too keen on the idea of VAT on fuel ...

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET ROSS,
Middle Orchard, Monxton,
Andover, Hampshire,
December 1.

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

TUESDAY DECEMBER 6 1994

Eggar defends £100m price cut in coal privatisation



By Ross Tieman
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

TIM EGGAR, the Industry Minister, yesterday defended his handling of the £1 billion sale of British Coal in the face of criticism that the Government has been forced to cut more than £100 million from the price tag.

Receipts from the sale of the English and Scottish regions will top £850 million, Mr Eggar told members of the Coal Industry Society in London.

Although the figure is sharply below the total offered to win the bidding by RJB Mining and Mining Scotland, Mr Eggar said that the prices "still represent the best value for money in each case".

The Minister's intervention came amid a bruising City debate over prospects for coal markets as two of the successful bidders seek funds from shareholders to buy part of British Coal.

Mr Eggar told industry leaders that the sale of British Coal would be scrutinised by both the Auditor General and the Commons Public Accounts Committee. He said that he would be "very happy" to have the results judged by the committee.

The Minister said that negotiations over the sale of the state coal industry in South Wales have yet to be completed, but are at an "advanced" stage. The sale of many other activities, from coal distribution to computer services, had been completed.

RJB Mining, the successful bidder for British Coal's three English

regions, has already launched a pathfinder prospectus to raise £400 million in new shares, and a further £494 million from its bankers, to complete the deal.

However, the Government has clearly been stung by criticism over the way in which RJB, headed by Richard Budge, bid £914 million, but has since negotiated £99 million off the price. The adjustment is attributed to a rundown in coal stocks.

Coal Investments, the quoted company that unsuccessfully bid £500 million to buy the heart of the English coal industry from the Government, yesterday announced a £26.3 million share placing and open offer to fund expansion.

CI, which is chaired by Malcolm Edwards, the former commercial

director of British Coal, will use £8.3 million of the placing proceeds to secure a 29.6 per cent interest in Mining Scotland. The Scottish consortium has agreed to pay £39.4 million, plus £10 million for coal stocks, to acquire British Coal's Scottish region, including the large Longannet deep mine, which will require extensive investment.

Of the rest, £6 million will be used to open a new longwall face at Coventry Colliery. This will help CI to fulfil new contracts with the two English electricity generators, National Power and PowerGen, for the sale of 4.8 million tonnes of coal over a period of six years. Talks are also at an advanced stage about the sale of coking coal to British Steel.

Half of the 36.6 million new shares

issued will be offered to CI shareholders at 76.5p in a four-for-13 rights issue. The rest have been placed with institutional investors.

If the sale of British Coal proceeds as planned, CI, which has taken over several of its redundant mines, will emerge as Britain's second largest coal mining company. However, it will be dwarfed by RJB, which will begin life with all but one of British Coal's 15 remaining deep mines, and a wide portfolio of opencast assets.

RJB will also be the chief domestic coal supplier to the English electricity generators, contracted to supply 30 million tonnes of coal a year until 1998. However, there will be competition from imports, as well as from CI, once those contracts expire.

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3033.5	(+18.2)
FT-SE All share	4259	(+5.61)
Nikkei	19305.66	(+307.36)
Dow Jones	3758.08	(+13.48)
S&P Composite	454.69	(+1.39)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	8 1/2%	(8 1/2%)
Yield	7.94%	(7.90%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Life long gilt	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)

STERLING

New York	1.5690*	(1.5610)
London	1.5597	(1.5596)
DM	2.4579	(2.4592)
FF	6.4466	(6.4418)
SF	0.0746	(0.0755)
Yen	156.68	(155.85)
£ Index	80.1	(80.3)

US DOLLAR

London	1.5723*	(1.5800)
DM	5.3960*	(5.4205)
SF	1.3265*	(1.3330)
Yen	100.30*	(100.60)
£ Index	63.3	(63.3)

Tokyo close Yen 100.54

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Feb)	\$16.00	(\$16.10)
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GOLD

London close	\$376.35	(\$379.25)
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* denotes midday trading price

Rivalry forces Mercury to shed 2,500 jobs

By Eric Reguly

MERCURY Communications yesterday announced that it will shed 2,500 employees, sell operating divisions and pull back from the residential sector in a fundamental restructuring. It will also clear the streets of its 3,000 pay phones.

The company, formed 12 years ago and owned 80 per cent by Cable and Wireless and 20 per cent by Bell Canada Enterprises, will take a pre-tax charge of £120 million in the current financial year to pay for the restructuring. The redundancies will absorb a third of that amount: writedowns on office property, stock and closures, such as eliminating the pay phones, account for the rest.

Duncan Lewis, Mercury's chief executive, said the "streamlining" was necessary because of widespread competition that stems well beyond BT, its biggest rival. In the past few years, 57 new telecoms licences have been awarded, while 90 cable fran-

chises have been authorized to offer voice telephony.

"Rapid growth has put a major strain on Mercury," Mr Lewis said. The job losses and the disappearance of 3,000 telephone boxes are the most visible parts of the restructuring.

Mercury will offer voluntary redundancies to 2,000 employees who hold permanent jobs, largely in administration and support. A company spokeswoman said that only a "minute amount" will end up being forced redundancies. The 2,000 will be lured out the door with a financial package, the details of which were not known yesterday. About 500 contract and temporary employees will leave without receiving redundancy packages.

When Mercury sells its customer equipment business, which makes phone and switching systems, another 1,000 employees will be removed from the payroll. It is expected that most of those

will keep their jobs when the division finds a new owner. A management buyout is being considered. When the programme is finished at the end of next year, Mercury will have about 8,000 employees, down from 11,400 today.

It appears that most of the telephone boxes will be sold for their scrap value. Mercury began installing them in 1985, investing about £25 million to develop the network and raise its profile on the streets. The business has never made a profit.

Mercury is free to leave the telephone box business without interference from OfTel, the industry regulator, because its operating licence does not insist on it. OfTel, however, requires BT to provide telephone boxes: it has 122,000 of them.

A Mercury spokeswoman said the company has already had an offer to buy a telephone box, from a man who has established a private telephone museum in Kent.

Mercury's restructuring will build on its involvement in the business market, ranging from international companies to domestic businesses. Mercury will not now take on the mass residential market, preferring to leave that battle to BT and the cable companies, which legally are able to provide both telephone and entertainment services.

Mr Lewis said: "We had been making inroads in the residential market but we don't have the brand image to take us forward." Mercury's residential services will come through partnerships or joint developments with the cable companies in future, he added. John Tysoe, an analyst at Société Générale, Strauss Turnbull said: "Mercury are saying residential customers are more trouble than they're worth."

Mr Tysoe said Mercury's £120 million restructuring charge will not have a dramatic effect on Cable and Wireless. He had expected C&W to report pre-tax earnings of about £1.2 billion at the year end, up from £1.088 billion last year. He now anticipates about £1.075 billion.

Pennington, page 27



The Mercury name will fade from the streets of Britain as its 3,000 telephone boxes disappear in the restructuring

Unions condemn 'an attack on workforce'

By Our Business Staff

UNION leaders were quick to condemn Mercury Communications over the 2,500 jobs it will cut by the end of next year. "It is a wholesale attack on a dedicated workforce," said Larry Brooke, national officer for telecommunications at MSF, the technical union. "They probably will experience a considerable time of unemployment."

But other industry sources suggested there would be healthy demand for any technical staff that leave Mercury. The communications sector as a whole is not growing — but some parts within it are.

Cable is one. More than 90 cable franchises have been authorised by OfTel, the industry regulator, to offer telephony as well as entertainment services. "It's not just people digging holes, we're creating regional phone companies," said Niall Hickey, spokesman for the Cable

Communications Association in London.

Cable companies, such as Videotron, now employ 16,000 people up from 10,000 at the beginning of the year. By 1998, there will be 25,000 jobs in the industry, Mr Hickey said. The mobile telephone industry is also on the move. There are four main operators in Britain, including Mercury's One-2-One division. They are adding customers in large numbers and are likely to need customer service staff.

The hitch in the scenario is that Mercury, like any company that is shedding workers, will keep its stars. "I would have thought that there is a reasonable chance that some of the people will find new work," said analyst John Tysoe, of Société Générale Strauss Turnbull. "But, inevitably, Mercury will let the worst people go and retain the best."

Clarke wins EU finance concession

THE Government has succeeded in removing a European Commission demand for new ways of financing major road and rail projects from the agenda of the EU summit in Essen on Friday and Saturday.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, won the agreement of his EU counterparts yesterday, after making clear that Britain opposed anything that would increase borrowing. The 14 projects, whose completion cost is put at £71 billion, include the Channel Tunnel link and three other schemes in Britain. The Commission is still, however, expected to ask the summit to consider new forms of EU support.

Finance ministers put final touches to a scheme to cut EU unemployment by reforms of labour markets and social security systems, in line with Britain's priorities. Mr Clarke said.

SFO and Maxwells fail to secure reporting curbs

By Patricia Tehan, Banking Correspondent

THE High Court has blocked an attempt to gag the press by the Serious Fraud Office and the Maxwell brothers and other defendants in criminal proceedings in relation to the Maxwell affair.

Mr Justice Lindsay refused an application to impose reporting restrictions on the current High Court case concerning Maxwell pension fund assets used as collateral to raise a £50 million loan. Eleven national newspapers, including The Times, had opposed the SFO application.

A successful SFO application would have ruled out any reporting of the attempt by UK pensioners to recover £60 million from Crédit Suisse Bank.

The bank had accepted the assets as collateral for the loan. The SFO said that the ban was necessary to avoid prejudicing the trials, to start after Easter next year. It had argued that there would be an overlap of evidence.

A trial against four defendants is scheduled to start on April 18. Defence lawyers will be seeking to have the Maxwell brothers' trial on fraud and other charges called off on the ground that publicity over the Maxwell affair has made a fair trial impossible.

The Crédit Suisse case, in which the trustees of the Mirror Group pension scheme and the liquidators of Bishopsgate Investment Management, the main Maxwell pension management company, are suing the bank, is due to end next summer.

If the SFO had succeeded in its attempt, pensioners could have been left in ignorance of the result for another two years.

The trustees and liquidators claim that Crédit Suisse should have known that shares offered as collateral for a £50 million loan in 1990 were pension fund assets and did not belong to Robert Maxwell Group, the tycoon's private business empire.

The forthcoming prosecution will be split into two parts. Kevin and Ian Maxwell, Larry Trachtenberg, former adviser to Robert Maxwell, and Robert Bunn, the former Maxwell Communication Corporation finance director, will be defendants in the first action.

Further proceedings against them and two others, Michael Stoney, a former Mirror Group Newspapers finance director, and Albert Fuller, former MGN treasurer, are to follow.

Arguments over calling off the criminal proceedings against all defendants in the Maxwell fraud trial are due to be heard next month.

GrandMet pubs buy S&N to £145m

By Martin Waller
DEPUTY CITY EDITOR

A SHARP boost from the purchase of 1,200 Chef & Brewer pubs allowed Scottish & Newcastle, one of Britain's big five brewers, to counter-balance the effects of a depressed brewing market and a downturn from the Pontins leisure business.

The group's array of pubs now accounts for 44 per cent of operating profits, eclipsing the brewing division, which saw halfway profits slide as margins came under pressure.

But Brian Stewart, chief executive, refused to comment on rumours that S&N was considering expanding brewing with the purchase of Courage, widely believed to be up for sale for £400 million.

S&N and Whitbread, each with 13 per cent of the British brewing market, are tipped as the most likely UK buyers of Courage and are thought to be keen to split it to avoid monopolies problems. Whitbread has also refused to comment.

Shares, which fell 14p on Friday, added 6p to 503p as S&N reported pre-tax profits up from £113.6 million to £145.1 million. But the main reason for the increase was the purchase last summer of the Chef & Brewer pub estate from Grand Metropolitan.

The interim dividend rises from 5.78p to 6.18p, payable on February 10 out of earnings, up 9 per cent to 20.2p. Operating profits from the retail estate, now including Chef & Brewer, rose £44.1 million to £73.3 million. Leisure rose just £1.9 million to £49.0 million, while brewing fell £5 million to £45.4 million.

Tempus, page 28

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Magnet assets value halved by Berisford

By CARL MORTIMER

BERISFORD International, the former commodities trader that bought Magnet for £56 million in February, has taken a knife to the assets of the kitchen business, with fair value adjustments to the balance sheet of £70.2 million.

Magnet, which makes up the bulk of the new Berisford, where Alan Bowkett has been chief executive since 1992, made operating profits of £6.2 million during the seven months of ownership, after sales of £102 million.

However, £10 million of losses from the discontinued cocoa trading operation left Berisford with a pre-tax loss for the year to September 30 of £3.2 million compared with 1993's deficit of £5 million. The company is paying a dividend of 0.5p a share for the year — the first since 1989 — after the return to trading profits.

Berisford has halved the £140 million book value of Magnet's assets to just under £70 million with a £21 million reduction in property values

and £22 million of written-off refurbishments. A further £20 million has been provided for the cost of holding properties until disposal. Mr Bowkett said the previous owners had capitalised a huge amount of the cost of refurbishment: "They even capitalised the security guards."

The company has been cutting costs with a reduction in Magnet's headcount by 469 and the closure of 31 outlets. The new strategy is to focus the furniture business more heavily on small builders. "In the 1980s, the company had a love affair with the consumer and ignored the small jobbing builder," said Mr Bowkett.

Berisford is in active negotiations to buy businesses in the US and Mr Bowkett believes a deal could be signed by the middle of the next year in the engineering or building products. At the end of September, the company had net cash resources of £54 million.

Tempus, page 28



Ron Hammond, operations executive, left, and Allan Bowkett, chief executive of Berisford International, yesterday

National Home Loans in the black

By PATRICIA TEHAN
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

National Home Loans has returned to profitability after three years of losses, with pre-tax profits of £11.4 million, after a £36.6 million loss last year.

The company has delayed its restructuring and balance sheet recapitalisation to early next year after its decision to renegotiate its bank finances. It had originally said that it would put capital restructuring proposals before shareholders by the end of this year.

NHL ran into financial difficulties in 1991 and was forced to renege on its debts the following year. At the time, it had balance sheet debts of £710 million. By the end of September this year, that figure had fallen to £168.8 million.

Jonathan Perry, the chairman, said: "Because we have reduced debt so much and ahead of schedule, it is better for us to put that 1992 refinancing on to a new footing on more normal terms for a company which I now feel is in a more normal position."

NHL stopped offering residential mortgages three years ago. Now, it has started up again with Homeloans Direct, a mortgage leading company that began trading in May this year.

Mr Perry said the market was very competitive, but the company had set targets that recognised that "we have been out of the business for three years". The targets were realistic and modest in relation to the size of the market, he said. NHL has signed up 1,000 financial intermediaries to sell Homeloans Direct products.

The company is not paying a dividend as it has negative distributable reserves of £150 million. Earnings per share were 3.7p, compared with a 43.1p a share loss last year. Bad debt provisions fell from £68 million to £23.8 million.

New Pillar director

Pillar Property Investments, the property group that came to the market in a £170 million flotation in August, has appointed Nicholas Sheehan, former chief executive of London & Edinburgh Trust, as executive director.

Interim pre-tax profits for the six months to September 30 were £34,000 after charging £2.2 million in respect of founding shareholder loan stock, repaid on flotation. No interim dividend is to be paid.

City divided over need for rise in interest rates

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

NEW figures for credit, the money supply and house building yesterday left the City divided over whether Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, will decide to raise interest rates at their meeting tomorrow.

Taken together, the economic snapshots tended to confirm that consumer demand is weakening, but the authorities are still likely to take their cue from evidence of strong industrial growth in the third quarter and evidence suggesting that companies want to put their prices up.

In a speech to Frankfurt University, the Governor of the Bank of England, said that monetary and credit data were an important part of the indicators he looked at — but only a part. In the autumn, he said that he was not concerned with above-target growth in M0. On balance, most economists believe that the next rate rise will be delayed until early next year, giving retailers some breathing space during the key Christmas and New Year shopping period. The narrow mea-

sure of money supply, M0, grew by 0.2 per cent in November, giving an annual growth rate of 7.1 per cent, compared with 7.3 per cent in October. This is still well above the top of the Government's 0 to 4 per cent monitoring range, which was confirmed in the Budget last Tuesday.

However, there has been a marked weakening of M0 growth in recent months, with the six months annualised growth rate dropping to 6.2 per cent in November, from 8.2 per cent in September.

The City, which has long been divided into two camps over whether M0's above-target growth is an important indicator of consumer demand and retail sales, told opposite stories again yesterday.

Kevin Darlington, of Hoare Govett, said that M0 may have passed its peak of growth in October and that November's figures "should ensure that concerns about M0 growth are downplayed further at the monthly meeting".

In contrast, Andrew Cates of UBS Ltd, said that the current rate of growth gives cause for concern about future inflation

and "there is a strong case to be made for a base rate increase this month".

Separate figures from the Central Statistical Office showed that net consumer credit rose £451 million in October — the first full month since base rates were raised. This was lower than the £479 million recorded in September. Bank credit card lending fell to £14 million, from £102 million in September.

Most of the net credit came from finance house lending, normally used for big ticket items, such as cars. Ian Shepherdson, UK economist at Midland Global Markets, said that this was due to the availability of cheap or zero credit deals. "Consumers are being just as fussy in the car market as they are in retailing, and 0% credit is money in the bank to them," he said.

Also released yesterday were figures for housing starts from the Department of the Environment. Provisional estimates suggest that 15,700 dwellings were started in October, a small rise from 15,000 in the same month last year. Completions totalled 16,600,

from 15,900 last year. Taking the latest three months compared with the same three months a year ago, both housing starts and completions were up 7 per cent.

However, taking the last three months compared with the previous three, starts were down 4 per cent, suggesting a renewed weakening in this sector. Nick Raynsford, Shadow Minister for Housing, noted that October's figure for housing starts was the lowest for six months and came before Mr Clarke's "disastrous Budget". He said that confidence in the housing market would be further damaged by reduced entitlement to mortgage interest relief and to cuts in the income support safety net, which would mean higher mortgage insurance costs.

□ Sales of new homes in America rose 1.3 per cent in October, to a seasonally adjusted rate of 726,000 units, after rising a revised 5.6 per cent in September. Sales were originally reported as rising just 2.6 per cent in September, and analysts had expected a 2.6 per cent fall in October.

High rates 'could impede recovery'

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE high level of interest rates in Western Europe is inappropriate for this stage of the economic cycle and could impede a recovery in investment and have serious consequences for job creation, according to a report from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Its economic bulletin warned governments against relying too much on raising interest rates to curb any excessive growth in domestic demand and to continue with efforts to cut spending and budget deficits.

It said: "Higher interest rates at this stage in the cycle are likely to hit business confidence and the recovery in fixed investment, which, in turn, will both worsen the prospects for lowering unemployment and increase the risks of an eventual resurgence of inflation due to a failure to expand capacity."

The report, however, also argued that cuts in government spending should be tempered by the need to maintain public infrastructure investment and to support effective training for school-leavers and the unemployed. Governments should be willing to maintain higher taxes during upturns and raise them if the economy starts to run up against capacity constraints.

It said: "Unfortunately, one of the legacies of the 1980s, when very high rates of taxation were used to lower inflation in many countries, is a phobia against any change in taxes unless it is down, an attitude which greatly complicates macroeconomic policy and the search for investment-led growth."

These warnings aside, the UN Commission is more optimistic about the economic outlook in Western Europe. A year ago, it was predicting average growth of about 1.5 per cent for this year. Now, growth is expected to be between 2.25 and 2.5 per cent on average in 1994, increasing to 3 per cent in 1995.

Inflation rates should remain low, partly as a function of lack of consumer confidence because of continuing high unemployment levels and the large burden of debt that consumers were saddled with at the beginning of the European recession. The UN Commission expects only a weak recovery in employment.

Growth in Eastern Europe seems likely to increase by between 2 and 5 per cent in 1994, a marked improvement. However, economic developments remain unfavourable in most of the countries of the former Soviet Union.

American buy for Medeva

By SARAH BAGNALL

MEDEVA, the pharmaceutical company, has made its first acquisition since issuing a profit warning in July 1993 that sent the shares sliding 104p to 122p.

That fall wiped nearly £300 million off the company's value. The shares have since partly recovered, and yesterday edged up 4p to 175p.

Medeva, which grew rapidly through a string of acquisitions after listing in 1987, yesterday announced the acquisition in America of Inhalon Pharmaceuticals, an inhaled anaesthetics manufacturer, for up to \$54 million in cash. The world market for inhaled anaesthetics is estimated at more than \$300 million a year.

Inhalon, based in Pennsylvania, has not made any sales to date but this year received US Food and Drug Administration approvals to make Enflurane and Isoflurane. Isoflurane, the generic name for Forane, the off-patent drug, is the most widely-used inhaled anaesthetic for general surgical use, with a world market share of 65 per cent. Enflurane, the generic name for Ethrane, has a 20 per cent share.

Medeva is paying for the acquisition in three tranches: \$35 million initially; \$10 million in the second quarter of next year; and \$9 million a year later, depending on targets being met.

Faber Prest hones profits

JEFF ROSS



Roger Favour attributes advances to cost cuts, overseas trade and the steel industry

FABER Prest, the industrial and distribution services group, has increased the total dividend by almost 11 per cent to 15.5p a share from 14p and will pay a final dividend of 10p on January 20 (Martin Barrow writes). In the 12 months to the end of September profits

rose to £6.6 million before tax from £5 million and earnings advanced to 43.74p a share (33.25p).

Roger Feavour, chief executive, said the advance in profits reflected the company's focus on the development of services to the steel industry,

particularly outside Britain, allied to further cost reduction. Operating profits from overseas activities grew by 52 per cent to £1.6 million and now represent more than one-quarter of group operating profits of £6.23 million. Faber Prest shares rose 8p to 560p.

Portillo wary of legal fight on EU jobs law

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Government may today avoid a legal clash with Brussels over new European employment law as Michael Portillo, the Employment Secretary, urges Europe to adopt a social affairs agenda aimed at job creation.

Business leaders in Britain are concerned about the costs to industry and services from two new European employment law directives to be considered today by European Union employment ministers at a meeting of the social affairs council in Brussels.

Led by Germany, current holder of the EU presidency, a

number of member states are keen to support the "posted workers" directive, which sets minimum pay and conditions for workers from one member state working in another, and a directive to bring conditions for part-time workers into line with full-timers.

Brussels expects Britain to try to challenge the legal basis of the posted workers directive, which is being brought forward today under parts of European law that require only a majority of those voting to approve it. But speaking to *The Times* as he flew out to Brussels after campaigning in the Midlands in the Dudley West by-election, Mr Portillo said only: "I

will have to think about whether to challenge the treaty basis". If the move is voted through under qualified majority voting (QMV).

Though Whitehall has taken its own legal advice on the move, officials are aware that the legal advisers to the EU Council of Ministers are convinced that bringing it forward on the basis proposed by the European Commission is legally sound.

Ministers believe that Germany may try to secure QMV agreement on posted workers today, especially if opposition to the part-time directive looks strong. While Mr Portillo said of the part-time move that "there might

be divisions which mean it can't be brought to a head", he made clear his intention to oppose it if necessary. "I can't see that I would be able to agree to it."

If Britain blocks the move, the council may refer the issue to the 11 non-British member states under the social chapter of the Maastricht treaty, from which Britain has an opt-out.

Mr Portillo gave the first sign of some readiness to accept the posted workers directive when he said that even if it were applied, it would have very little practical impact on British workers. However, he stressed the importance to Britain in opposing it: "It's a matter of

principle that separates us rather than the practice."

He said he would use the Council's examination of the Commission's White Paper on future social policy by Padraig Flynn, the Social Affairs Commissioner, to put forward his own proposals for a job creation agenda for Europe.

John Monks, General Secretary of the TUC, who will also be in Brussels today, said: "The Government should stop wrecking efforts to improve conditions for European workers and start playing a constructive role as a responsible social partner."

Peace looms, page 29

BAT seeks approval for US takeover

IN A process expected to last at least one week, lawyers for BAT Industries began arguments in a US federal court yesterday for approval of its \$1 billion takeover of American Tobacco Company. The Federal Trade Commission has tried to block the merger on the grounds that it could stifle competition. The two sides must convince Milton Pollack, a Manhattan district judge, of their case. Analysts said BAT will argue strongly that the merger of American Tobacco and its Brown and Williamson subsidiary will allow the new firm to compete with Philip Morris and R J Reynolds, the two giants of the US tobacco industry.

The merger would give the new company about 18 per cent of the US cigarette market. Philip Morris and R J together control more than 70 per cent. BAT will also claim American Tobacco's products are so different to Brown and Williamson's that they compete head to head in only a tiny part of the market. The FTC will argue that the merger would remove competition, rather than adding it, and would put an end to discounting by American Tobacco.

Hunterprint bid backed

HUNTERPRINT, the loss-making printing company that once had a stock market value of £85 million, said that the only alternative to a £1.23 million takeover bid by Canada's Quebecor Printing was to call in the receivers. Hunterprint's board yesterday urged shareholders to accept the offer of 2p per ordinary share and 133p per preference share. Commitments in favour of the offer have already been given in respect of 53.48 per cent of Hunterprint.

Hutchings at helm

GREG Hutchings is moving up from chief executive to executive chairman of Tomkins, the conglomerate whose activities range from Smith & Wesson firearms to Ranks Hovis McDougall baking. Michael Moore is to retire after 11 years as non-executive chairman. Ian Duncan becomes deputy chairman and managing director (finance). Bob Muddimer, the RHM chairman, and Tony Reading become joint managing directors (operations). Pennington, page 28

Oil price falls again

WORLD oil prices fell again yesterday, extending a sharp bear run which has knocked more than \$1 per barrel off prices in two trading days. Traders sold oil futures heavily on fears of a winter supply glut. Analysts say oil refiners have produced too much petrol and heating oil, and fear demand will not absorb it. The benchmark Brent blend crude oil future for January delivery traded at \$16.04 per barrel in London, 15 cents below Friday's close.

Denby rises to £4.1m

DENBY Group, the maker of informal tableware whose shares were floated in June, said that although consumer demand was levelling off in Britain, the impact would be minimised by the company's strong brands. A 14p maiden final dividend is due on March 6. Pre-tax profits in the year to September 30 rose in line with the flotation forecast to £413 million, up from £2.76 million. Earnings per share were 9.2p (6.5p). The shares fell 6p, to 155p, against 130p at flotation.

Fewer failures forecast

THE number of businesses failing is likely to be 12 per cent lower in 1995 than this year's levels, according to a new study. While the latest quarterly economic review from Trade Indemnity, the credit management group, suggests that lack of investment may be undermining the prospect of prolonged economic recovery, its findings on the continued decline of business failures support claims that recovery in industry is well under way.

Forman sale approved

THE Department and Trade and Industry has conditionally approved the proposed acquisition by Daily Mail & General Trust (DMGT) of the *Nottingham Evening Post* and other newspaper titles from T Bailey Forman. Conditions include the formation of a new editorial board responsible for maintaining editorial independence at the *Nottingham Evening Post*. In addition, DMGT must sell the *Long Eaton Advertiser* and *Stapleford and Sandiacre News*.

More flying with BA

BRITISH Airways said that scheduled revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs) in November rose by 7.3 per cent on the previous year, with the scheduled passenger load factor rising by three points, to 67.3 per cent. Capacity for the month increased by 2.6 per cent. Premium traffic increased again in November. Traffic growth on routes in Britain and Europe in November remained good, with scheduled RPKs up by 11.2 per cent, and a 1.9 per cent increase in capacity.

Inchcape car-hirers sold

INCHCAPE, the motor dealer and international trader, has sold its two car and van rental businesses, Kenning Car & Van Rental Group and United Rental Group (URG), for £29.75 million to a new company, to be called United Kenning Rental Group, led by Kevin Betts, former finance director of Central Television, and David Hardman, previously owner of 25 per cent of URG. Inchcape says it is focusing on its core vehicle business activities of importing, distributing and retailing.

Funding new enterprise

BUSINESS in the Community (BIC) has set up an investment fund that combines private and public sector money to offer loans for community enterprises that have difficulty in borrowing from the banks. The Local Investment Fund (LIF) has a start capital of £3 million, comprising £2 million from the private sector and £1 million from the Department of the Environment. The Government's £1 million is a "once-and-for-all" contribution.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.13	1.98
Austria Sch	13.28	18.78
Belgium Fr	53.58	49.28
Canada Cdn	0.618	0.595
Cyprus Cyp	2.945	2.995
Denmark Kr	10.22	9.42
France Fr	6.55	6.23
Germany Dr	8.20	8.40
Greece Dr	400.00	375.00
Hong Kong \$	12.71	11.71
India Ru	57	68
Italy Lira	2625.00	2470.00
Japan Yen	171.00	159.00
Malaysia M	2.018	1.924
Netherlands Gld	2.802	2.672
Norway Kr	11.28	10.48
Portugal Esc	282.00	243.50
S Africa Rd	16	15.20
Spain Ptas	212.50	195.50
Sweden Kr	12.31	11.51
Switzerland Sfr	2.00	1.92
Turkey Lira	0.018	0.017
USA \$	1.667	1.587

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BT cannot be smug in telecoms war Buying the black stuff, and making a profit Tomkins thins out its top team

Mercury poisoning

MERCURY Communications has decided it can't be all things to all people.

The company, owned 80 per cent by Cable and Wireless and 20 per cent by Bell Canada Enterprises, seemed bent on becoming a small version of British Telecom. Mercury went after business customers, made equipment, installed public phone boxes, started a mobile-phone division and, most recently, attacked the mass residential market.

It didn't work, and now Mercury and its employees are paying for it. Yesterday, it unveiled a restructuring programme that will see the elimination of 2,500 employees over the next year, the sale of its equipment manufacturing division, the elimination of its 3,000 phone boxes and the closure of its "infotainment" arm.

It will no longer go after residential customers. Mercury has decided that it will stick with what it knows best - providing service to corporations of all sizes.

The restructuring, which will cost £120 million, in the current financial year, delighted BT. "They have conceded that they can't compete in the market," said one official, smugly. "They'll become a niche player, which is what they should have become in the first place."

But BT should not take all the credit for putting Mercury to the wall. The cable companies did their bit as well. More than 90 cable franchises have been authorised by OfTel, the industry regulator, to offer voice telephony in addition to the bread-and-butter entertainment services such as specialty channels.

Most of the cable companies are owned by wealthy foreign companies and they consider Britain, the only country the world where cable companies can be licensed to offer voice services, a gold mine.

One player, Videotron, has spent £300 million on its British cable franchises since 1988 and has growth rates of more than 20 per cent a year. More than 90,000 of its 160,000 subscribers buy both phone and video services.

Mercury, well aware of the cable companies' growth, decided it could never compete with them in the residential market. BT should take note.

OfTel is going out of its way to make sure cable thrives at the

big boys' expense. They are exempt from paying access charges to complete calls on BT's network (that charge cost Mercury more than £60 million last year). Furthermore, OfTel will not level the playing field, allowing BT to send entertainment down its lines, until the next decade.

BT can be smug now, but not for much longer. As the cable companies eat into its market, pressure will increase and cut-backs may be inevitable. Don't be surprised if BT, in a few years, holds a press conference to announce more redundancies in its residential business.

Mining the City's fund managers

IN SPITE OF 47 years of State ownership and 700,000 job cuts, British Coal has lost none of its ability to embarrass the Government.

There are now only 24 days to go until the December 30 deadline for selling the remaining 16 collieries, and the open cast pits and coal sale contracts that go



with them. But the battle over the Corporation's grubby carcass continues. Blinded by a cloud of coal dust, it would be easy to forget what is at stake.

British Coal was offered for sale in five regional packages: Scotland, Wales, and three English regions. The world's great mining companies, RTZ and Hanson among them, declined to bid.

Instead, it was left for management to propose a buyout of the core English regions covering Yorkshire and the Midlands, in contention with two companies carefully positioned for the purpose: RJB Mining, headed by Richard Budge, and Coal Investments, chaired by Malcolm Edwards.

Budge's £914 million knock-out bid, way above any rival offer, secured him all three English regions, and with them a three-year contract to supply 30 million tonnes of coal a year, worth some £900 million, to the two big electricity generators, National Power and PowerGen.

Coal Investments came away with a 29.6 per cent interest in Mining Scotland, which will take over British Coal assets north of the border, to add to the portfolio of half a dozen redundant English pits already acquired from British Coal.

Three questions trouble the City now: how much of a market will be left for British coal producers when the generators are free to import all they like after 1998? Can RJB, a relative novice to deep mining, successfully manage a business four times its own size? And can CI prosper in a market dominated by a rival almost ten times bigger?

The City verdict on RJB, and the market opportunities, will be handed down on December 20, when its £894 million fund raising is to close. With his rights

issue underwritten, Mr Edwards is already financially home and dry. But he still has to deliver the coal, and a profit.

The thoughts of Chairman Greg

IF EVER they produce a City and Business edition of Trivial Pursuit, one of the trickier questions would have been to identify the chairman of Tomkins, so inextricably is the company linked with the name of Gregory Frederick Hutchings.

Now Mr Hutchings has gone the whole hog and moved into the chairman's seat, while hanging a large Keep Out sign on the door to the chief executive's office. There will not now be a chief executive; his long-time finance director becomes deputy chairman, a meaningless title as he continues to count the beans as managing director, finance, and two managing shares of joint managing director, operations.

The circumstances of Michael Moore's departure as part-time chairman are unclear, but the

company has had to deny week-end talk of a row over Mr Hutchings's salary. This last has never won any awards for voluntary restraint in the past, even if the disappointing performance of the shares will rein in the bonus element this year. Even worse, two of the three remaining non-executives are leaving, pleading pressure of work elsewhere.

All this hardly suggests there is a strong voice on the board to counter any future direction chosen by Chairman Greg. Tomkins is one of the few remaining 1980s-style conglomerates that is prepared to counter-act further expansion wherever it chooses and has the financial firepower to do it. The shares, perversely, rose a penny yesterday; but some in the City remain concerned.

Heseltine on VSEL

MICHAEL HESELTINE, President of the Board of Trade, is expected to announce his decision on whether or not to refer rival bids from BAE and GEC for VSEL to the MMC tomorrow. Thoughts of Sir Bryan Carsberg, OFT chief, were dispatched to the DTI late on Friday. BAE, via Kleinwort Benson, has complained about GEC's lobbying tactics to the Panel which is unlikely to rush to judgment.

Power firm pondering TV venture

NORTHERN Ireland Electricity is considering extending its activities into gas distribution and cable television over the next few years. David Jeffries, chairman, said yesterday as the company announced an interim dividend up by 15 per cent, from 3.39p to 3.9p.

Pre-tax profits were £44.3 million, against £42.4 million, in the half year to September 30, but this was after a £5.9 million exceptional charge for the efficiency and redundancy programme, which cut controllable costs by a tenth in the half year after allowing for inflation. The interim dividend is 3.9p (3.39p).

Acquisitions boost Airtours to £76m

By SARAH BAGNALL

ACQUISITIONS and bigger market shares helped Airtours, Britain's second largest package holiday company, lift profits 66 per cent in the year to September 30.

The rise in pre-tax profits to £75.8 million from £54.5 million was in line with City forecasts and the shares added 1p to 44.5p. Turnover rose 58 per cent from £615.5 million to £971.7 million. Last year's profits were deflated by £9 million of costs for Airtours' aborted takeover bid for Owners Abroad. Without that cost, profits rose 39 per cent.

David Crossland, chair-

man, said: "The most significant event for Airtours over the last twelve months has been the acquisition in June of Scandinavian Leisure Group." Airtours paid £80 million for SLG, Scandinavia's largest leisure travel company, which added £151.4 million to turnover and £13.7 million to operating profits.

The contribution was for four months - the peak months for SLG and as a result Airtours has benefited from inclusion of the most profitable months without the loss-making winter months. The final dividend rises from

8p to 10.9p, making 12p for the year (9p). The dividend was paid out of earnings of 49.24p a share, up 72 per cent.

Mr Crossland said the board was considering varying the split between the interim and final payments.

Bookings for this winter are 27 per cent up on last year. The group's winter market share is 21.9 per cent, compared with 19 per cent last year. Early bookings for summer 1995 are 13 per cent ahead and its summer market share is up to 24.8 per cent.

Tempos, page 28



Steve Westoby, left, financial director, with Ian Mosley

EuroDollar beats squeeze

By PATRICIA TEHAN

EURODOLLAR (Holdings), the car rental company, increased its pre-tax profits by 16.3 per cent in the six months to September 30, helped by efforts to boost its share of the domestic personal market to offset the effect of intense price competition for business for overseas customers.

Ian Mosley, chief executive, said the margins on incoming overseas leisure business have been squeezed, prompting EuroDollar to try to build up its share of car rental customers in the UK with the introduction of "loyalty building" incentive schemes. EuroDollar's share price slipped by 3p to 207p yesterday, 13p lower

than its flotation price in July. Mr Mosley said he was not unhappy with the share price. "We are seen as an interest rate business, a motor-related business, a 1994 float, a management buyout. That is a pretty naff hand at the moment."

The company is continuing to open new branches, with 115 planned by the end of March compared with 104 at flotation.

The company is paying a first interim dividend on February 3 of 1.6p, covering the period since its flotation on July 8. The policy is to pay one-third at the interim stage and two-thirds at the final.



Rolls-Royce cars close to deal with Mercedes

VICKERS was the centre of renewed market speculation after a spokeswoman confirmed that a deal between Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, owned by Vickers, and Mercedes-Benz, owned by Daimler-Benz, should be announced before Christmas.

Sir Colin Chandler, Vickers' chief executive, told analysts last month that the engineering group expected to announce a partnership around the end of the year between its Rolls-Royce luxury cars business and another leading motor manufacturer. The deal, which would involve a technological and components tie-up for new models, was expected to involve German manufacturers Daimler-Benz or BMW, though Daimler-Benz is now the clear favourite.

There is renewed industry speculation that a deal, expected to centre on the supply by Mercedes of engines for a next-generation Rolls model, could be announced late this week or early next week, with negotiations said to be in their delicate, final stages.

Vickers shares firmed 3p to 182p, on volume of 1.28 million shares. Meanwhile, shares started the week in a positive mood, though it was left to Wall Street influences and the futures market to drive equities higher.

Dealers said that attempts at a stronger rally were hampered by political uncertainty ahead of today's House of Commons vote on raising Value Added Tax on domestic fuel bills and concern about a possible increase in interest rates. A positive start to trading on Wall Street, following on from Friday's gains helped to underpin sentiment in London, though most gains were largely technical. The FT-SE 100 index ended 16.2 points higher at 3,033.5. Second-liners were less fortunate, with the FT-SE 250 index slipping 1.6 to 3,458.3.

Volume was thin, reaching only 456.3 million shares. Cable and Wireless was the focus of attention on a quiet day, with the shares up 2p to 378p in spite of confirmation that its Mercury Communications operation was set to axe a higher-than-expected 2,500 jobs by the end of next year. The cost of shutting down the workforce will be £120 million, to be taken as a pre-tax charge in Mercury's results for the year to end-March 1995. Elsewhere, British Gas



Sir Colin Chandler moves R-R closer to a partnership

firmed 1/2p to 305 1/2p in spite of a recommendation by Hoare Govett, the broker, to switch out of British Gas and into either BT, up 2 1/2p to 372 1/2p, or Severn Trent, 5p stronger at 537p. Utilities were mixed with numerous ex-dividends and the electricity sector nervous ahead of today's Commons vote.

Airtours, Britain's second

largest holiday company, pleased the market as it accompanied a surge in full-year profits with strong bookings and a better-than-expected dividend of 12p (8.81p) a share. Acquisitions and an increased market share helped Airtours lift full year pre-tax profits by 66 per cent to £75.8 million. Among others reporting, Scottish & Newcastle added 6p to 503p after lifting interim profit

its by 27.8 per cent, with an additional boost as Goldman Sachs was said to rate the stock as the most attractive in the sector. Elsewhere, Whitbread rose 6p to 555p.

Inchcape rose 1p to 442p after the group confirmed the disposal of Kenning Car and Van Rental and United Rental, its two car and van rental operations, for £29.8 million.

Hunters Armory Group, the commercial printing company, rose 1p to 177p after expanding its operations with the £4.4 million acquisition of Harlequin Colourprint of Bristol. The purchase, which expands Hunters' customer base and geographic spread, is expected to provide immediate benefits.

Interim figures on Thursday, fell 11p to 535p, while Burton Group eased 1 1/2p to 66p. Kingsfisher 6p to 448p, Marks and Spencer 2p to 392p, Next Shop 6p to 197p and Body 5 1/2p to 248 1/2p.

Shares in H. Young Holdings advanced 7p to 69p after the marketing and distribution group, whose products span STP lubricants to Head sports equipment, pleased the market with an 84 per cent jump in full year pre-tax profits to £1.45 million and a confident statement on prospects.

British Airways firmed 2p to 369p after the airline said its scheduled passenger load factor had risen by 3 points, or 7.3 per cent, to 67.3 per cent in November.

BAT Industries, seeking a ruling from the US authorities over its \$1 billion bid for American Tobacco, advanced 10p to 438p.

Hanson, the Anglo-American conglomerate that last week posted strong earnings and raised its dividend, firmed 1 1/2p to 238 1/2p after James Capel was said to have placed a trading buy on shares, while talk of a Smith New Court buy recommendation helped P&O add 2p to 604p.

Hunterstall fell 1 1/2p to 13p after confirmation of an agreed bid at 2p a share. Speculative support helped USM-quoted Haemocoil add 4p to 31p.

McKeezie, down 9p to 422p, was unsettled after James Capel, the broker, changed its recommendation on the stock from a hold to a sell.

GILT-EDGED: The day started lower and remained in negative territory, with nervousness ahead of today's VAT-on-fuel debate in the House of Commons and tomorrow's £2 billion auction and the meeting between the Chancellor and the governor of the Bank of England.

The March series of the long gilt future ended 9 ticks lower at £101 1/2, on quiet volume of 38,000 contracts traded. Among cash stocks, losses stretched to £-x among longer-dated and £-x-linked issues.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shares followed through on last week's strength to trade higher into midday, with interest-sensitive shares leading blue chips. The Dow Jones industrial was up 14.46 points at 3,759.08.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 3759.08 (+13.46)
S&P Composite 454.69 (+1.39)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 19305.66 (+307.38)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 8302.53 (+80.86)

Amsterdam:
Euro Stoxx 412.35 (+3.34)

Sydney:
All Ordinaries 1897.5 (+17.4)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2071.12 (+32.61)

Singapore:
Straits Times 2185.57 (+3.45)

Brussels:
General 7339.30 (+28.54)

Paris:
CAC 1973.65 (+9.06)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 649.20 (+5.30)

London:
FT 30 2288.9 (+5.3)

FT 100 3035.5 (+18.2)

FT-SE Mid 250 3468.5 (+1.8)

FT-SE Euro Stoxx 100 1353.74 (+0.82)

FT A-Share 1507.06 (+5.61)

FT Non Financials 1026.45 (+3.56)

FT Gold Mines 2194 (-2.1)

FT Fixed Interest 109.82 (+0.26)

FT Dow Jones 91.89 (+0.23)

FT FTSE 100 100.00 (+0.00)

SEAG Volume 456.3m

USM (Daimler) 153.44 (+0.28)

USM 1590.00 (+0.00)

Exchange Index 80.1 (+0.2)

Bank of England official close (4pm)

ECU 1.7078

RPI 145.2 Oct (2.4%) Jan 1987-100

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TEMPUS Coals to Newcastle

SIR Alick Rankin should be congratulated for bringing a new term to the economic debate. He describes the state of the British consumer market as "enigmatic", suggesting that while all the economic indicators are set on green, the customer willfully refuses to act accordingly.

Hanging over Scottish & Newcastle, to an even greater degree than the rest of the sector, is the eventual fate of Courage and 20 per cent of the industry's brewing capacity.

S&N's interims were driven by the purchase of the Chef & Brewer estate, even if the latter's contribution is inevitably unquantifiable now the company no longer strips out the figures. For the purposes of comparison, a £44 million improvement in pre-tax profits from retail in the first half contrasts with £33 million from the Chef & Brewer pubs in the previous half, which gives some clue as to

how the contribution from the integration of the estate is accelerating. Those benefits will increase out of all proportion next March when the deal for Courage to supply the Chef & Brewer estate lapses.

About half the £5 million downturn from the beer division reflects lower margins from the malting business that will not repeat into the second half. But there remains the Courage unquantifiable. S&N has clearly looked at the business and would like a chunk of the assets in the South. But any price will have to be a highly attractive one to be sold to the City. Meanwhile, the asking price for Courage is being pushed up by the putative interest of some big overseas players.

S&N shares currently sell at 13.6 times this year's figures and will not advance until some of the uncertainty is out of the way.

Airtours

THE unstoppable success of Airtours, in an industry strewn with casualties, defies belief. Everything the group touches, whether it is cruises, travel agencies or even the Scandinavian holiday market, seems to turn to gold.

The difficulty is in seeing where the gold is buried. Airtours is heavily vertically integrated, running the travel agencies that sell many of its tours and the aircraft that take the holidaymakers off to the sun. It insists that each of the businesses is run on arms' length, commercial terms but never splits out its figures to demonstrate.

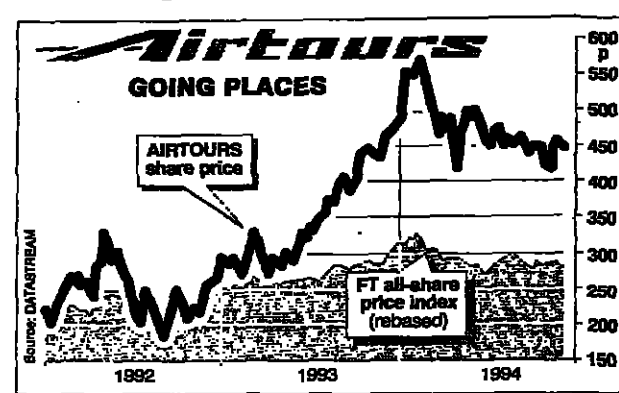
That, however, is less of a concern given the strength of the balance sheet. Airtours' net cash balance has risen to £292 million in spite of its repeated acquisitions, and although £130 million is client

deposits, the business is generating more than enough cash of its own to fund the expansion.

In the current year, the growth in sales and market share should slow, but the group's move into the cruise market should improve margins from 7.7 per cent, towards double digits.

That sort of growth would

propel Airtours' profits towards £90 million this year, but the market still has difficulty coming to terms with the group's success. The shares at 442p, trade on less than nine times current year earnings forecasts. That is not expensive, provided that Airtours continues to run rings around the package holiday market.



Medeva

MEDEVA has secured entry into another niche pharmaceutical market with Inhalon. In practical terms, the company has bought a turn-key plant to produce generic inhaled anesthetic drugs just after the expiry of the original maker's patents.

As yet, the company has made no sales or profits, but the original patented version of isoflurane proved to be a tremendous cash machine for BOC for years, resulting in a setback last year after BOC's patent expired in 1992. Both Medeva and its bigger rivals, BOC and Abbott Laboratories, are playing down the sales potential of Inhalon — no one is keen for a price war and Medeva needs to build up market share from a zero base.

However, if Medeva is going to make money from anaesthetics after its £54 million investment it must take a decent share of the \$500 million market and that will

mean more than the \$10 million in sales predicted by its competitors. Medeva is likely to avoid competing head-on for the biggest customers but could hope to gain as much as 10 per cent by chipping away at edges of BOC's market.

Berisford

HAVING written off half of the assets of its new core business, Berisford is left with an operation earning something like a decent return: on an annualised basis Magnet is earning some £10 million from assets worth £70 million. The company can afford to be relaxed about the write-downs having paid only £56 million for the kitchens business.

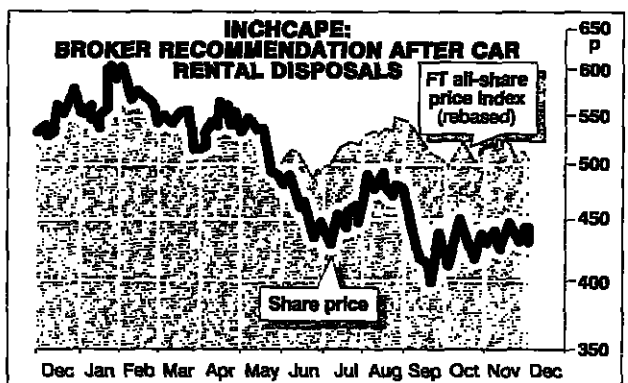
More important is what Berisford has been doing to the company since acquisition. The meagre 6 per cent return on sales earned in the first seven months should grow substantially after a massive reduction in costs. Having raced after consum-

ers in the late 1980s and built up a large sales force of men in suits, the company is targeting the small builder and next year Magnet will be fighting for a share of the new build housing market.

Magnet should be able to earn a 10-13 per cent return on sales but is unlikely to reach that target in the first year and the lacklustre housing market is doing nothing to increase volumes and ease the pressure of competition. Heavy price-cutting from Spring Ram's new Regency Doors operation is cutting the margin at Magnet's own efficient doors business.

Berisford could make £18 million next year but the shares, at 218p are still demanding two years strong growth and investors should take note of the heavy hints about large American acquisitions. The company has said no to ordinary share issues but there is always the option of convertibles.

EDITED BY BEN BENNETT



COMMODITIES			
LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE			
COCA			
Dec 94	91.960	May	91.960
Mar 95	91.960	May	100.960
May 95	91.960	Jul	101.960
Jul 95	91.960	Sep	102.960
Sep 95	91.960	Nov	103.960
Nov 95	91.960	Dec	104.960
Dec 95	91.960	Jan	105.960
Jan 96	91.960	Feb	106.960
Feb 96	91.960	Mar	107.960
Mar 96	91.960	Apr	108.960
Apr 96	91.960	May	109.960
May 96	91.960	Jun	110.960
Jun 96	91.960	Jul	111.960
Jul 96	91.960	Aug	112.960
Aug 96	91.960	Sep	113.960
Sep 96	91.960	Oct	114.960
Oct 96	91.960	Nov	115.960
Nov 96	91.960	Dec	116.960
Dec 96	91.960	Jan	117.960
Jan 97	91.960	Feb	118.960
Feb 97	91.960	Mar	119.960
Mar 97	91.960	Apr	120.960
Apr 97	91.960	May	121.960
May 97	91.960	Jun	122.960
Jun 97	91.960	Jul	123.960
Jul 97	91.960	Aug	124.960
Aug 97	91.960	Sep	125.960
Sep 97	91.960	Oct	126.960
Oct 97	91.960	Nov	127.960
Nov 97	91.960	Dec	128.960
Dec 97	91.960	Jan	129.960
Jan 98	91.960	Feb	130.960
Feb 98	91.960	Mar	131.960
Mar 98	91.960	Apr	132.960
Apr 98	91.960	May	133.960
May 98	91.960	Jun	134.960
Jun 98	91.960	Jul	135.960
Jul 98	91.960	Aug	136.960
Aug 98	91.960	Sep	137.960
Sep 98	91.960	Oct	138.960
Oct 98	91.960	Nov	139.960
Nov 98	91.960	Dec	140.960
Dec 98	91.960	Jan	141.960
Jan 99	91.960	Feb	142.960
Feb 99	91.960	Mar	143.960
Mar 99	91.960	Apr	144.960
Apr 99	91.960	May	145.960
May 99	91.960	Jun	146.960
Jun 99	91.960	Jul	147.960
Jul 99	91.960	Aug	148.960
Aug 99	91.960	Sep	149.960
Sep 99	91.960	Oct	150.960
Oct 99	91.960	Nov	151.960
Nov 99	91.960	Dec	152.960
Dec 99	91.960	Jan	153.960
Jan 00	91.960	Feb	154.960
Feb 00	91.960	Mar	155.960
Mar 00	91.960	Apr	156.960
Apr 00	91.960	May	157.960
May 00	91.960	Jun	158.960
Jun 00	91.960	Jul	159.960
Jul 00	91.960	Aug	160.960
Aug 00	91.960	Sep	161.960
Sep 00	91.960	Oct	162.960
Oct 00	91.960	Nov	163.96

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Sir William joins the club

SO BANKERS can be complimentary about each other after all — as Lord Carrington, a former Foreign Secretary and former chairman of Christie's, will have noticed at The Savoy yesterday. The noble lord, in fine and jovial form, was guest speaker at the 25th annual lunch organised by the Joint British Cancer Charities for the Othello Award for the Businessman of the Year. This was instituted in 1970 by Jocelyn Hambro, who died in this June, and recognises "an outstanding contribution to the candidate's own business, his community and the country". To date, only two "mistresses" have joined this exclusive club — Gerald Ronson, of Heron International in 1984, and Garry Weston, of Associated British Foods in 1991. The rest have been knights or peers. Should a woman ever make it, the "businessman" tag will require attention. The 1994 honour, four silver coasters together with a citation that runs to 210 words, fell on the shoulders of Sir William Purves, chairman of HSBC Holdings. The selection panel included Lord Kingsdown, the former Governor of the Bank of England, and John Sclater, chairman of Hill Samuel.

Partner? Not me

IS GOLDMAN Sachs losing its lustre? Witness the cool reception by Kevin Conway, 36, an investment banker, when offered a partnership after ten years with the firm. It is only the second time in the company's 125-year history that a would-be partner has turned down such a position. Instead of making millions a year and sharing profits — even after retirement — Conway will become a senior principal at the small, private, Wall Street investment firm of Clayton, Dubilier and Rice. Denizens of The Street say the bond market slump earlier this year squashed Goldman's earnings, and now wonder if a "culture shift" inside the firm could have provoked the snub.



"Trouble with payphones is that they don't pay"

Early starter

IF YOU thought it was only policemen who were getting younger, then grab Credit Lyonnais. Laing's latest directory of UK food manufacturers and turn to United Biscuits. Under directors, and their ages, and their service years, it lists Ray van Schaik, chairman of Heineken and a UB non-executive since 1992, at the grand young age of one, adding that he has been on UB's board for two years. Van Schaik is, in fact, 63, though friends insist he doesn't look it.

Pounds ahead

THE £1 note lives! The Royal Bank of Scotland, which has continuously produced its own banknotes since 1728, yesterday issued two million very special £1 notes in Scotland to mark the centenary of the death of Robert Louis Stevenson. But my! How the note has put on value. The special collectors' pack costs £2.50.

COLIN CAMPBELL

Customers could lose out in battle for the gas market

A report by MPs will call into question the benefits of greater competition, Ross Tieman says

Like all good ideas, it sounded simple. Open the household gas market to all-comers, and the regulator could pack her bags and move on, leaving competition to assure the best deal for the consumer. So taking the 1993 Monopolies and Mergers Commission report as its starting point, the Government drew up plans for a fully competitive gas market from 1996, when the first families would also be able to shop around for electricity supplies.

From April 1996, 5 per cent of Britain's 18 million gas-consuming households would be free to buy their gas from someone other than British Gas. A year later, another 5 per cent would be opened up, paving the way for the subsequent free-for-all.

Since no one could afford to duplicate the £17 billion pipeline system built by British Gas, the company would be obliged to split off its transmission and storage activity. This business, TransCo, will be run as an arms-length subsidiary, carrying gas for all-comers, including Public Gas Supply, its sister company, at the same rates. Clearly, there were some problems to overcome. British Gas has 900,000 elderly or disabled customers on its Gas Care register, and millions more customers are in arrears with payments, or use so little gas that bills scarcely cover the cost of supplying them.

But Tim Eggar, the Energy Minister, found himself a bright Treasury economist turned businessman, Clare Sportiswood, to sort them out. As director-general of Gas Supply, Ms Sportiswood seemed sure that she could devise rules that would keep our home fires burning, from the rich man in his castle, to the poor man at his grate. And so she can. The oil companies, whose independent gas supply arms already control most of the industrial gas markets, have promised that prices will fall by 10 per cent for every home in the land. It is an easy promise to make. They do not have to keep it, nor take the political consequences if it turns out to be wrong. But Ms Sportiswood has to ensure that everyone wins, and nobody loses as a result of competition. This, it now emerges, is not such an easy task. Indeed, the signs are growing that some pretty clever fixes will be required to produce even the semblance of a free market in gas supply.

Two pieces of evidence, examined carefully by the Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee, support this view. First, the climbdown over the scale and speed at which competition is to be introduced. Instead of opening up 5 per cent of the market in each of the first two years, the Government has now resolved to run a trial, involving just 500,000 households, in the first year. That will be extended to two million households, possibly in more than one area, in the second year. This trial is widely expected to take place in the South West, where consumers are



It is hard to see how allowing the producers to sell gas directly to customers can lead to big savings

furthest from the beach-heads where gas is landed, and may, therefore, be expected to face the highest transmission charges.

What does this show? First, that there are doubts, in some areas at least, over the claim that increases in transmission charges will be absorbed by cuts in the fuel element of bills. Second, there has been a scaling back. In reality, 500,000 homes equates to only 3 per cent of the customer base. But fewer than a third are likely to

switch in the first year, whatever the blandishments of the independent operators. So from opening up 5 per cent of the market, the Government has effectively scaled back to a trial involving one per cent of households or less. Doubts about the benefits are confirmed by the decision to set the transmission charge at £15 a year per site, plus 4.19p a therm. A study by TransCo had suggested that the rate that best reflected costs would be an annual charge of £26.08, plus a fee of 2.48p per therm of gas delivered.

The implication is that Ofgas has chosen to lock in a subsidy to the low-volume consumer. By making low-volume users cheaper to supply, Ofgas has reduced the risk that they will be abandoned, or end up worse off under a free-market regime. From the outside, it appears that Ms Sportiswood has also tacitly admitted that the free market just is not up to the job of delivering price

cuts to all, without a helping hand. Such measures provide ample grounds to call into question the merits of this competition project. After all, the price of gas to the households is made up of two main elements. First, there is the cost of the gas itself. Since most gas is already bought by British Gas from private sector producers, it is hard to see how allowing the producers to sell it direct to customers can lead to big savings. Then there is the transmission charge. This is already strictly pegged by Ofgas to an annual change of inflation minus 5 per cent. Since the entire transmission activity is controlled by British Gas, this formula is obliging it to achieve substantial cost savings.

The future price of household gas, therefore, will largely be determined, not by competition, but by the price caps imposed by the regulator. These, in turn, will depend on the perceived ability of British Gas to cut its costs. The scope for savings is considerable. During the 1960s and 1970s, British Gas constructed a nationwide transmission system, serving 18 million homes and a million firms. Gas now accounts for half of all non-transport energy in Britain. The pace of construction has now slowed, while the introduction of information technology means fewer clerks or managers are needed. The threat of competition has served only to accelerate the rate at which British Gas

reshapes itself to serve the mature UK gas market at the lowest cost consistent with safety. So, British Gas, over the next three years, is to shed a third of its 75,000 staff.

Independent commentators are beginning to question whether domestic customers will, after all, be better off under a competitive regime. The Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex has concluded that the "overall balance" of costs, benefits and risks is unfavourable if competition is extended to the household consumer. Not only are the available benefits modest, the study found, but security of supply will be reduced and the orderly development of North Sea gas fields will be impaired.

A further development should cause concern. Although blocking gas imports from the Norwegian sector of the North Sea, the Government is encouraging the formation of an alliance to build a gas pipeline from Britain to The Netherlands. Cedric Brown, British Gas chief executive, says the company has surplus gas it wants to sell to continental consumers. The implication is that UK gas prices are depressed at present by a surplus of available gas. Logically, a pipeline to the Continent will drive up gas prices in Britain to continental European levels. That might increase the producers' profits, but it will do nothing for Britain's international competitiveness. And if it is completed in 1998, as planned, the upward pressure on prices will occur precisely when British Gas's monopoly purchasing power — which works in favour of the consumer — begins to be seriously eroded.

‘The signs are growing that some clever fixes will be required’

Peace looms over EU's social policy

Harmonisation is falling out of fashion in Brussels, Wolfgang Münchau writes

Today may be the last time that the British Government will clash with its "European partners" over social policy. Michael Portillo, the Employment Secretary, may be limbering up for a fight over the two controversial directives, pushed by Germany and the European Commission, on posted and part-time workers, but they are the last of an old batch. Once these are out of the way, the direction of European social policy — as outlined by a recent Commission White Paper — will change, and should prove less offensive to Britain. This is part of a trend away from fixation with the EU's architecture towards a more dynamic approach, based on real-world economics.

The Commission recognises that it has exhausted the scope for social harmonisation and that further harmonisation would do harm in several countries. In social policy, the emphasis will, therefore, change towards cutting unemployment. The approach will be piecemeal.

There are two views on this. Since Brussels has no direct powers on such bread and butter economic issues, the Commission may be restricted to convening conventions; there will always be people willing to listen to two-hour speeches on the European dimension of vocational training.

Of course, the Commission can help by encouraging cross-border employment exchanges. One example is a pilot project for a pan-European job vacancy database. Applications of such a database will be limited to executives, bilingual secretaries and construction workers, in other words, the most mobile 5 per cent of the EU population. A more optimistic scenario is that the Commission could initiate ideas towards moderate labour market reforms, and win over some of the more sceptical EU states. One such proposal, to be discussed at the Essen EU summit on Friday, would be to promote "non-standard" work, such as part-time or contract work, still discouraged in some countries, notably Germany. If the British Government is serious about winning the argument in the EU for its own ideas of labour market organisation, it could do worse than ally with the Commission on these issues.

In a few months, once Jacques Delors is no longer Commission President, and once the social battles between Mr Portillo and his colleagues have been fought, it is conceivable that the European Commission's social policies will come under fire from the Left. The drift to the right, however, will be limited since the Commission remains wedded to the European Social Model, distant from free labour market fundamentalists. It will be interesting to see how Mr Portillo reacts. Such a relatively optimistic scenario, if it happens, is still a few months away. Optimism will not pervade today's meeting of employment ministers. The Germans, desperate to achieve at least one meaningful piece of legislation in their lacklustre EU presidency, have chosen the directives on posted and part-time workers. The posted workers directive will force firms, mostly in construction, to abide by national agreements on pay and social protection. It will not cover individuals who work abroad of their own accord, nor will it cover au-pairs or British chaperones.

Mr Portillo has criticised the directive as anti-communitaire, since it restricts free movement labour in the EU, a reservation shared, in varying degrees, by Spain, Portugal and Ireland. Germany and France, which support the directive, argue that clear rules are needed to prevent exploitation of loopholes. One German construction company set up a "dummy operation" in Portugal, hired low-paid Portuguese for a building project in Berlin, and pocketed the difference in wages. Like the works council directive, the first under Maastricht opt-out rules, the posted workers directive may highlight the ideological gulf between Mr Portillo and his European colleagues. The practical consequences of these directives are hardly earth-shattering, and in a few months' time, everybody will wonder what the fuss was all about.

‘European social policies may come under fire from the Left’

BUSINESS LETTERS

Suspensions over PSBR label for British Nuclear Fuels

From Mr Con Allday
Sir, Pennington is almost certainly correct (November 23) in suspecting that there was more than bureaucratic statistical convenience behind the decision to put BNFL into the PSBR regime.

When BNFL was established in 1971 as a company under the Company Acts, Sir John Hill and his colleagues argued passionately and successfully for independence from the PSBR. It was to give the maximum degree of independence from day to day Treasury control, particularly of capital expenditure.

The arrangement has worked remarkably well. The company is commercially sound, efficiently managed and a great financial success. During the 23 years, the Government has received £400 million in dividends, and its original equity investment

of £33 million has increased in value to over £700 million.

Capital for the company's massive expenditure programme, including Thorp, was raised through City loans, customer prepayments and internal self-financing. Admittedly, the City loans were guaranteed by Government as lender of last resort, but no liability has ever materialised in this respect.

Had the company been within the PSBR, it is certain that, like the railways and other nationalised industries, the company would have been starved by the Treasury of funds. Its projects would never have materialised and yet another British advanced technology would have sunk into oblivion.

Although the Government has retained 100 per cent shareholding in BNFL, there is provision for up to 49 per

cent private shareholding and it had always been our hope that this would be allowed in order to demonstrate that public/private companies are a realistic possibility.

One cannot help suspecting that the present move has been designed to forestall the model being used or quoted as a possible solution to the problems of the Post Office, railways, Nuclear Electric etc, thus preserving the doctrine that no state-owned industry can be efficient.

Treasury officials will have gleefully supported the proposal as they never gracefully accepted the original decision.

The whole episode smells of rotten fish. Yours etc, CON ALLDAY, (BNFL Chief Executive, 1975-86; Chairman, 1983-86), Bredon, 54 Goughs Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire.

Names not using delaying tactics

From Mr D.J. Harris
Sir, The letter from Captain Tew (Names should face up to reality, December 2) indicates a total misunderstanding of the situation.

As chairman of a defence group, I refute any suggestion that we or any other group helping to defend names against the ever escalating claims of Lloyd's are using delaying tactics knowing that they will ultimately lose.

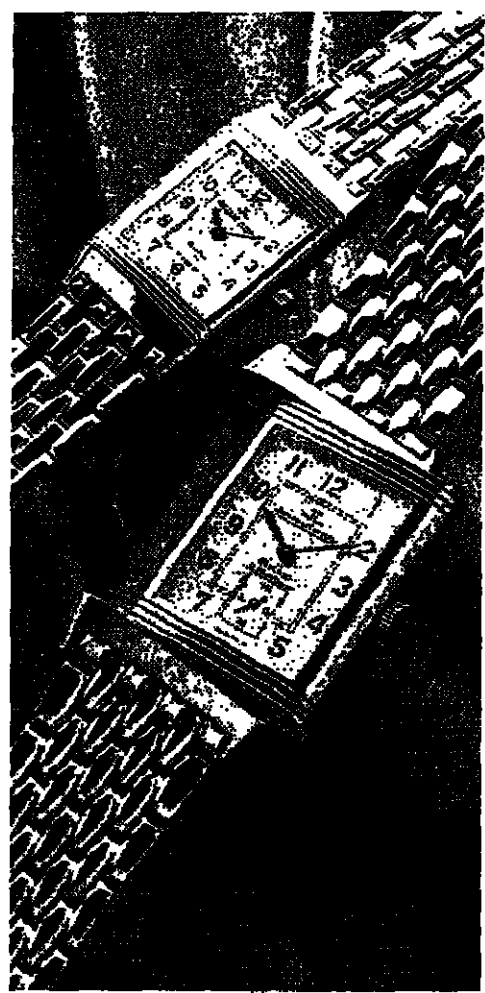
The Court of Appeal has just unanimously held that it is arguable that the claims of Lloyd's are being made under a bylaw which is illegal because it contravenes Article 85 of the Treaty of Rome. The issue will now be tried in court and the names are advised that they will win.

In addition the names are advised that the defence, filed in early 1993, that Lloyd's has acted fraudulently towards very many names, will be successful. Lloyd's continues to do everything possible to avoid a trial of that case in which the true facts would come to light.

Fifteen hundred members of our group from 24 different countries believe that it is Lloyd's that knows that it will ultimately lose and that one day it will have to account for the financial disaster that it has inflicted upon its external members from whom it hid its knowledge of the impending catastrophe for so long.

Yours faithfully,
D.J. HARRIS (Chairman), Association of Non-North American Names, A member of the Global Defence Association, The Kinetic Centre, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire.

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THEATRE page 34

A very rum do at the
Mermaid, as Treasure
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first time in years

ARTS

MUSEUMS page 35

The most popular
pastime? A new report
claims 110 million
museum visits a year

GALLERIES: British art's most fervent champion; accusations fly in Washington; selected London shows

Thoroughly modern Saatchi

Richard Cork
profiles the man
whose bold
championing of
modern art makes
other collectors look
timid by comparison

Although Charles Saatchi is far and away the most important collector of contemporary art in Britain, surprisingly little is known about the impulses behind his voracious urge to buy. In an age of ever-expanding media exposure, he remains conspicuous for his unwillingness to be interviewed or even photographed. An intensely retiring man, Saatchi has never explained why he pours so much of his considerable wealth into young artists' work.

But the less he says, the more our curiosity grows. On the whole, collectors in this country are notoriously reluctant to acquire contemporary work. While private buyers across Europe and the United States embrace even the most controversial new art, the British prefer the safety of the past. Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber concentrates on the reassuring familiarity of the Pre-Raphaelites, and leaves more troubling alternatives alone. So Saatchi really is an astonishing phenomenon. His appetite for untested modernity offers an implicit reproach to the timidity of his fellow countrymen. And his handsome, custom-converted gallery in St John's Wood has given the work of many living artists a much-needed airing.

Today, almost a decade after the Saatchi Gallery opened its blindingly white spaces, the signs are that its owner's reclusiveness may be giving way to a more extroverted stance. He took the entirely unexpected decision to hand over this year's Turner Prize, after making a speech on live television. Saatchi looked well-rehearsed and relaxed in front of the cameras. Without hesitation, he voiced an unbridled enthusiasm for the emergent generation. "I'm not sure what today's young artists are putting in their porridge in the mornings," he declared, "but it seems to be working. They're producing the most striking new art being made anywhere in the universe. And it seems every museum, from Nebraska to Alaska, is ringing up trying to organise shows of their work."

To judge by those ringing promotional words, Saatchi has assumed the mantle of new British art's most fervent champion. He even offered three adjectives to sum up the temper of the work he most admired: "challenging, articulate and relevant". True, he then went on to concede that sometimes the art appears "tasteless, cynical and uncouth", but added: "I think it's because sometimes we all are". Saatchi did not allow himself to explain his endorsement any further. But only days after giving the Turner speech, a well-illustrated new book called *Shark Infested Waters: The Saatchi Collection of British Art in the 90s* throws more light on his acquisitive activities. Although 35 artists are represented here, they only amount to a part of his collection. Saatchi also possesses substantial holdings of modern American and German art, as well as senior British painters like Lucian Freud and Frank Auerbach. But this book concentrates largely on young artists.

The cover, dominated front and back by the infamous 14-foot tiger shark hovering eerily in its tank of



Paula Rego's *The Maids* (1987): Saatchi's latest gallery collection together with the content of the book reveal the breadth of his interest

milky formaldehyde, places Damien Hirst at the forefront of his generation. And Sarah Kent, who has written the book's illuminating text, points out that he was responsible for making visible many of the artists included in these pages. Even as a student, Hirst organised mixed exhibitions of his contemporaries' work and he has continued to do so, with remarkable verve.

The Saatchi book proves, however, that Hirst's own work is more substantial and various than the tabloid press wants us to believe. Far from confining himself solely to preserving dead animals and fish in green liquid, Hirst is an artist of considerable range. The large number of plates devoted to his work suggests that Hirst is Saatchi's favourite young artist.

Needless to say, the collector himself does not contribute a single word to the book. It demonstrates, even so, that he is far from narrow in his enthusiasms. If Saatchi is happy to purchase Marc Quinn's self-portrait head of dried blood, immersed within its refrigerated case, he seems equally interested in figurative painters. Jenny Saville's towering, overweight female nudes are given a prominent place in the book. Only 24, she is at the beginning of her career. But Saatchi has already secured a generous number of her canvases, and he is also alert to the significance of more abstract painters.

The cool minimalism of Alex Landrum and Brad Lochore chimes with the rigour of the gallery's spartan interior. It would be easy to conclude that Saatchi's taste is simi-



Saatchi: his confident Turner Prize speech suggests he may be becoming less reclusive

larly austere, but the book's illustrations roam far wider. At one extreme, John Greenwood's cartoon-like paintings of wriggling, devouring biomorphs point to a weakness for played-out, latter-day Surrealism. But these disappointing pictures should be set, at the other extreme, against triumphant purchases like Rachel Whiteread's masterpiece *Ghost*, Rose Finn-Kelcey's haunting *Steam Installation* and Richard Wilson's justly celebrated expanse of sump oil, flooding an entire room to magical effect.

All three of these major works suggest that Saatchi finds himself drawn, at heart, towards a peculiar kind of epic, melancholy stillness.

The truth is, though, that the collection's bewildering catholicity makes his central preferences impossible to pin down.

Pride of place at the latest exhibition is given to Paula Rego, whose most memorable canvases preside with magisterial assurance over the vastness of the main room. Her annus mirabilis was 1987, and Saatchi shrewdly acquired key paintings from that year like *The Maids* and *The Policeman's Daughter*. The latter is especially powerful. The young woman polishing her father's tall boot may be performing a filial duty, but she is an imposing presence and her forceful bulk gives the painting its energy.

More recently, this hypnotic reliance on a few statuesque figures has given way to a more complicated, fussy and frankly illustrative style. Rego's new series of *Dog Woman* pictures may, however, herald a welcome return to awesome simplicity. The example shown at Saatchi's, combined with the related works at Marlborough Fine Art, indicate that she is regaining her grasp of monumental form.

As if to stress that he is not restricted to figurative painting, Saatchi devotes another large part of the show to John Murphy. Like Rego's *Dog Woman* sequence, Murphy's principal exhibits are pastels. Unlike Rego, though, he avoids the human presence. The dozen images making up *The Nocturnal Inscription Represents*... all focus on the night sky. The tiny points of white puncturing their deep blue surfaces convey a sense of unfathomable vastness. But Murphy's approach is free from romanticised rhetoric.

These muted pictures leave us to project our own emotions into the star-spattered void.

The third exhibitor, Avis Newman, occupies a position roughly half way between Murphy and Rego. Paint is her main medium, and she likewise regards her five large canvases as a cycle. Their collective name suggests, though, that *Figure who no one is*... will escape easy definition. Hints of female figures loom out of the pictures. But they refuse to resolve themselves in a readily identifiable way. Newman moves, with subtle sensuality, from billowing forms redolent of ripe bodies to small, unpredictable details.

Since Newman exhibits far too rarely, her appearance here is doubly welcome. But the paintings in her room were completed a decade ago, and so she makes no appearance in the new book. Nor do the other two artists on show, reminding us that the Saatchi collection is an immense and, at least in part, unfathomable iceberg. He has often been castigated for buying in bulk, and for brusquely selling off a particular artist's work. However damaging the latter tactic may be to a particular reputation, Saatchi still deserves enormous credit for the open-minded patronage and encouragement he has extended to British artists. In a country where they are so often left to fend for themselves, his support should be cherished.

John Murphy, Avis Newman and Paula Rego at the Saatchi Gallery (071-624 8299) Thurs-Sun 12-6. *Shark Infested Waters* is published by Zwemmer at £19.95. Paula Rego's new work at Marlborough Fine Art (071-629 5161) until Dec 30.

Rain spoils a capital show

One of America's leading galleries is severely criticised in a confidential investigation. Murray White reports

An investigation of the National Gallery of Art in Washington has discovered such severe mismanagement of its buildings that it "threatens the security of the collection". The confidential report urges that "steps should be undertaken immediately to correct these deficiencies before disaster occurs". The report was disclosed last week by a local television station, WJLA-TV, which uncovered it in the course of a six-month probe of the museum's management. The station made a copy of the 99-page report available to *The Times*.

Written under the auspices of the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers, the study was undertaken at the gallery's request. In March, the investigative team interviewed 31 of the museum's executives, including the director, Earl A. Powell III. They also conducted on-site inspections of the museum's West Building, which opened in 1941, and of the I.M. Pei-designed East Building, which was completed in 1978.

"Existing skylights and the roof leak extensively, allowing water to enter the building. The buildings' facades contribute to the threat of moisture penetration," states the report, which was issued in September. "The buildings' mechanical systems are operated in a 'by-the-seat-of-the-pants' manner. Temperature and humidity excursions are commonplace and could exceed poorly trained workers' abilities to bring such excursions under control before serious damage is done to the artwork. There is an obvious need for a more sophisticated building automation system to control the heating and air conditioning. This is a critical deficiency that places the collection at risk."

When the climate-control system ran amok last year, it inundated a room of Colonial American paintings with steam, the televised exposé revealed. A museum security guard said that the steam "was so thick that you could cut through it with a knife", and a maintenance worker

added that "the walls were wet" and paintings were "turning white". One of the artworks reportedly affected was Copley's *Watson and the Shark*, a large oil painting of 1778 that is one of the museum's most beloved American masterpieces.

Kim Skeen, the reporter who led the team conducting the TV station's investigation, also unearthed an internal memorandum dated October 13, 1994, in which two gallery officials state that "we discovered sections of plaster were falling" in two art storage areas. "When we investigated the ceiling space we discovered a lot of old water damage as well as a bucket which contained water. We are very alarmed."

Museum management asserts that the public has no reason to fear for the safety of its art treasures. "The National Gallery's collection is fully protected and not in any danger," gallery spokesman Ruth Kaplan told *The Washington Times*. She said that an automated climate-control system will be installed next year and that the present one is operational. "It has been functioning. It's labour-intensive in that it requires a lot of manpower. The system is not dysfunctional." She termed last year's steam incident "a temporary problem which was immediately corrected" and said "there was no damage to any of the pictures".

Concern over the disclosures is being expressed on Capitol Hill. Congressman Ralph Regula, an Ohio Republican who is expected to be the new chairman of the panel that appropriates nearly \$55 million a year to the museum, is calling for a formal inquiry into the performance of gallery officials. "I can't believe they'd let this happen," he told the paper. "It just astounds me." The National Gallery was created in 1937. Gallery holdings include works by Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Rembrandt, Rubens, Goya, Monet and Picasso.

OPERA: Ingenious use of mime and dance whets the appetite for Purcell's year

A midwinter night's masque

Lina Lalandi's English Bach Festival has got in early on the Purcell tercentenary — by a whole year to be precise — with Sunday's one-night stand of *The Fairy Queen*. The performance certainly whetted the appetite for all that is to come.

Purcell's so-called "semi-operas" can sound bland in the concert form in which they are all too often heard, but put them in almost any stage setting and they immediately spring to life: he was a theatre composer to his fingertips. Yet the difficulties remain manifold, especially for an organisation as strapped for cash as the EBF. *The Fairy Queen* score consists of five self-contained masques slotted into an adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Ideally you

The Fairy Queen Covent Garden

need, quite apart from lavish stage spectacle, a large company of actors, plus hefty contingents of singers and dancers, plainly beyond EBF's resources. Their solution was ingenious. The action, reduced to its bare bones, was mimed to Purcell's dance music, and was perfectly clear to a British audience familiar with Shakespeare, Britten or — in this theatre — Ashton. Thus the five masques happened at the appropriate stages of the action. The smooth progress was enhanced by Jonathan Cocker's unpretentious, no-nonsense production, marshalling the hard-working company,

some of whom doubled mime and singing duties (there must have been much frantic changing in the wings). Stephen Preston's discreet choreography had great charm, especially for the Chinese monkeys (please don't ask me what they are doing in the *Dream*), and it all looked very pretty as designed by B.J. Ryan: a false stage, scatter-cushions and a backcloth inspired by Inigo Jones, plus lavish 17th-century costumes and much delving into the EBF's apparently limitless stock of ostrich feathers. The whole was bathed atmospherically in Roger Frith's by turn golden and nocturnal light.

But perhaps the most encouraging aspect was the ease with which singing and playing were projected into an auditorium in theory far

too big for either. Howard Williams's spryly rhythmic, smoothly flowing conducting of the EBF Baroque Orchestra gave ideal support to a vocal ensemble that was competent rather than accomplished, yet each voice, was easily audible; their words too. This bodes well for the Royal Opera's *King Arthur* next spring.

There is nothing modest about Jennifer Smith's soprano. The star of the show, she got the best songs in a variety of roles from Night to Nymph to (best of all) Juno-as-marriage-counsellor, giving the newly paired Athenian lovers a good talking-to and setting the seal on a thoroughly enjoyable evening. How sad that it will not be repeated.

RODNEY MILNES

AROUND THE GALLERIES

THE Accademia Italiana is between homes, but it has an interim exhibition space in Smith's Galleries, Covent Garden. The first real show there, entitled "Four Italian Masters Of Contemporary Art", is an eccentric but illuminating inquiry into the roots of certain divergent modern tendencies, as exemplified in the work of Enzo Cucchi, Sergio Lombardo, Fabio Mauri and Maurizio Mucchetti. In Cucchi's odd little automatic-looking drawing, it is impossible not to trip over symbols, even if he denies that he deliberately puts them there. Lombardo is showing two groups of paintings. Mauri and Mucchetti both make installations.

Smith's Galleries, 56 Earlham Street, London WC2 (071-836 9701), until Saturday.

Cyril Mann (1911-1980) — a selection of whose works on paper is on show at Piano Nobile — was, when he wanted to be, a brilliant realistic draughtsman, a dazzling colourist, possessed of an individ-

ual vision. But he would keep swimming against the stream: an impressionist symbolist in the Thirties, an expressionist in the postwar years, a Fauve in the Fifties, he really fitted into fashion only during the war, when his rather theatrical, semi-surrealist scenes of bomb damage seemed to link him with the Neo-Romantics. *Piano Nobile*, 26 Richmond Hill, Richmond-upon-Thames, Surrey (081-440 2435), until December 24

The fourth in the Lefevre Gallery's series of shows drawn from the Edward Burra estate covers "The Formative Years", from his admission to the Royal College of Art in 1923 to his first exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in 1929. The show climaxes in Toulon (1927), the first unmistakable Burra both in style and in subject-matter. *Lefevre Gallery*, 30 Bruton Street, London W1 (071-493 2107), until December 21.

JOHN RUSSELL
TAYLOR

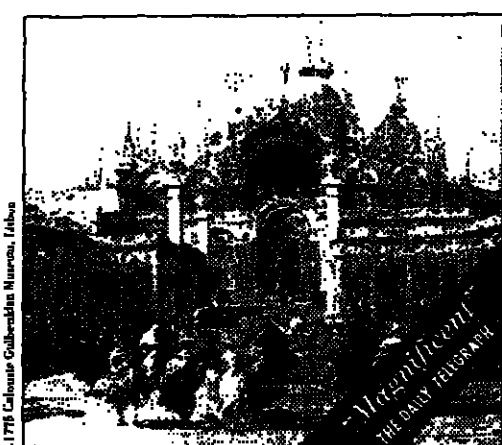
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LONDON

A CHRISTMAS CAROL. Opening night for John Mortimer's new version of the Dickens tale. Directed by Mortimer, the production is a collaboration with the "Traditional" Christmas. Cive Francis is Scrooge, and Mortimer plays him in a brilliant comic creation. All in all, should be very close to the original. *Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (071-638 8891). Tonight, 7pm. Then Dec 7-10 and again from Dec 15.*

TWENTY SOMETHING. Also at the Barbican, percussionist Evelyn Glennie joins Markus Starz and the London Sinfonietta for tonight's showcase for as composers, all in their twenties. Some of the names — such as Thomas Adès — may already be familiar. Worth a look and listen. *Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (071-638 8891). Tonight, 7.30pm.*

TITANIC SOUNDS. Gwyn Byrnes offers some still musical competition for the Barbican's programme with another of his intriguing ideas: a new version of his 1972 "musical fantasy", *The Sinking of the Titanic*. Performed by Byrnes's own ensemble, with a light introduction by Dr. C. Byrnes. The first half of the concert includes *Three Eagles for Nine* (concerto for piano and orchestra) and *Queen Elizabeth* (Hull, South Bank, SE1 (071-628 8800). Tonight, 7.45pm.

THE LIBERTINE. First night of preview for Stephen Jeffreys's comedy in the role of the original Earl of Rochester. Played by David Westhead, who also plays Domest, Cheriego's portrait of Rochester when *The Man of*

TODAY'S EVENTS

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Kris Anderson

Most of the repertoire: Max Stafford-Clark directs.

Royal Court, Sloane Square, SW1 (071-720 1745). From tonight, 7.30pm. Opera Dec 9, 7pm.

ELSEWHERE

BIRMINGHAM. Anthony Clark's production of *Peter Pan* brings back Ian Pegg (Peter), Mark Jay (Hook), and other stars from recent successes. Flying sequences and all the proper stuff. Directed by Paul Dalt.

REPETITION. Contemporary Squares (021-236 4455). Preview today and Dec 7-10. Check box office for performance schedule: until Jan 23.

SOUTHAMPTON. Tonight and tomorrow's last chance to see the season to see Derek Deane's new production of *Glennie for Nine* (concerto for piano and orchestra) and *Queen Elizabeth* (Hull, South Bank, SE1 (071-628 8800). Tonight, 7.45pm.

THE LIBERTINE. First night of preview for Stephen Jeffreys's comedy in the role of the original Earl of Rochester. Played by David Westhead, who also plays Domest, Cheriego's portrait of Rochester when *The Man of*

BROKEN GLASS. Strong performances from Margot Leicester and Henry Goodman in Arthur Miller's latest, *An American Tragedy* (Miller's 1930s, warning to ignore the Nazi menace). *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Tonight-Thurs, 7.30pm; Fri-Sat, 7.15pm.*

CALAMITY JANE. The creative team behind last year's popular *Sweet Charity* brings the *Doris Day* film musical to the stage. Phil Wilton directs for The Strand Theatre. *Strand, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE. Nigel Hawthorne directs and stars as Lord Ogby in the comedy by George Colman, the Elder, and John Vanbrugh. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

FASCINATING AIDA. The girls are back with an evening of glamour, quick wit and sharp tongue. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

MISS JULY. Acclaimed for her production of *A Doll's House* last year, Sue Lofthouse now directs Strindberg's drama of lust and submission. *New End, 27 New End, NW3 (071-734 2222). Preview tonight, 7.30pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

OLIVER! Lush Cameron Mackintosh revival of the Bar musical. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

NEW RELEASES

MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET (U). John Hughes's glossy but just about digestible remake of the 1947 fantasy, with Richard Dreyfuss as a department store Santa. *MGM Chelsea (071-352 5095). Opens: Kensington (0426 914096) Leicester Square (0426 915893) Marble Arch (071-628 8800) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).*

CRONOS (R). An archangel's devotee of eternal youth and a taste for blood. Imaginative Mexican vampire film from pioneering director Guillermo del Toro. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

TO DIE FOR (R). Feeble British supernatural comedy about the aftermath of a lover's death from AIDS. Peter Macdonald's film. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

TRIAL BY JURY (R). Will juror Joanne Whalley-Kilmer submit to mafia pressure? Laughable courtroom drama, with George E. Stone, William Hurt, and Armand Assante. Director, Heywood Gould. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

CORINNA, CORINNA (PG). Hausman Whooli Goldberg renews a household number by grief. Incredibly predictable sentimental drama with Ray Liotta and Tina Turner. Director, Jesse Nelson. *MGM Heymarket (071-352 5095) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332) Warner (071-437 4343).*

MARY SHEELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN (R). Unlikely, overdone, predictable take on the famous story. Kenneth Branagh directs and stars with Robert De Niro and Michael Keaton. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS (PG). The King of Hell in the form of a Christmas tree. Technically brilliant puppet animation, conceived by Tim Burton, directed by Henry Selick. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

A GOOD MAN IN AFRICA (R). Multicultural version of William Boyd's comic about corruption and morality in West Africa. With Colin Firth, Sean Connery, Diana Rigg, Louis Gossett Jr, and John Lithgow. Director, Bruce Beresford. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

HIGHLANDER II: THE SORCERER (R). Incoherent addition to the live-action series about Christopher Lloyd's immortal character, Andy Macgregor. *Metropolitan, Tottenham, SE1 (071-628 2252). Preview tonight, 8pm; opens Dec 7, 7.15pm.*

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Mayflower, (0703 229771). Tonight, Sat, 7.30pm; Wed and Sat, 2.30pm.

NEWCASTLE. Dance of a very different sort is on offer as the reformed Rambert Dance offers another week of magnificent programming. *Arts Centre, Newcastle, (0191 261 1111). Tonight, 7.30pm; Wed, 2.30pm.*

GLASGOW. Gerry McGraw plays Pavel Nemilov, the Russian deserter hiding out for 40 years, in *Arctic* (Fugard's *A Place with the Pige*). *Arts Centre, Newcastle, (0191 261 1111). Tonight, 7.30pm; Wed, 2.30pm.*

LONDON GALLERIES

Barbican. A Brit Youth, Avant-Garde Art and the Great War (071-638 4141) British Museum. Prints of the Barbican School (071-638 1658).

Hayward. The Romantic Spirit in German Art 1780-1800 (071-638 3144) National Portrait Gallery. The Swells (071-306 3063).

National Gallery. The Young Michelangelo (071-638 3321) The Royal Academy. The Glory of Venice (071-638 7488).

Serpentine. Rebecca Horn (071-402 5075). Tate. Whistler (071-402 5075).

V & A. Mexican Gallery (071-638 6509).

LONG RUNNERS

Arts Centre. Haymarket (071-638 8800) Beautiful Thing. Duke of York's (071-638 8123).

Blood. Broadway (071-638 8123) Buddy. Victoria Palace (071-638 1317).

Cast. New London (071-402 5075) On Approval. Peter Hall gives us the London play as it was, and is a sophisticated, cleverly devised, and a named piece. With Martin Jarvis, Anna Carter, Louise Lombard, Simon Ward.

An Inspector Calls. Adelphi (071-638 6404). Lady Windermere's Fan. Adelphi (071-638 1118).

Les Misérables. Adelphi (071-638 6404). Milla Sallago. Theatre Royal (071-494 5400).

The Phantom of the Opera. Adelphi (071-638 1118). The Phantom of the Opera. Adelphi (071-638 1118).

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THEATRE: Stevenson's classic misfires; but a New Zealand duo reveal a rare comic touch



Rum affair at the Mermaid: the cast of *Treasure Island* in John Adams's new staging of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic adventure

WRITTEN by Lynda and Jools Topp, directed by the Topp Twins; original music by the Topp Twins; set design by Jools Topp and lighting design by Lynda Topp; the cast: Lynda Topp and Jools Topp. This show is so much a family two-piece that the sight of a different name as stage manager (Hannah Arbell) comes as a modest shock. Perhaps she is a Topp by marriage.

They are billed as identical twins which is not quite true, so far as their present appearance goes, though Lynda has a little more body on her, nowadays than her sister. Each can play the fool when the script requires it, but Jools

is inclined to recover sooner and get on with playing the guitar. Lynda will play the guitar for a moment or two, to show willing, but the spoons is (are) her instrument, and when her blood is up and the spoons are tuned (I suppose you know that spoons should be tuned?) then the devil is in her and she will bash them into whatever comes her way. She will even go out of her way to find suitably hard objects, such as the head of my colleague on the *Financial*

Times, for this is a show that periodically pulls the audience into the act. "We call it crowd-participation," Lynda tells us. "You call it fear."

They come from New Zealand and brought their previous show, *Camping Out*, to the Drill Hall last year. I wish I had seen it because they are a comedy act to treasure. A

speciality is affectionate parody of country and western, though, heaven knows, even when played straight this is a genre that keeps toppling into self-parody. Lynda has a way of fidgeting with the waistband of her dreadful skirt that is at the same time untruth and endearing. She lifts a handbag from someone incautious enough to be sitting in the front row, burrows into it and then looks up with an expression of sudden guilt. The glance is gone in a second

but all the panic of being caught red-handed is there. The fragile storyline is just a device for moving the action to three continents and into different music venues. The nearest visual gag is their entry as tiny tots, shuffling forward on their knees from which the fluffy slippers that have been attached thereto peek out from under their nightgowns. I don't wish to spoil the surprise of their final bow, so I will simply say that while a different hat on wig is worn for each entry, they wear considerably less below the neck.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Top of the cultural pops?

Visiting museums and galleries is now Britain's favourite cultural pastime, a new study claims. Richard Morrison reports

Good and bad news is revealed by a panoramic survey of museums and art galleries to be launched today. On the plus side, the survey suggests that the number of people visiting museums has been seriously underestimated, and that approximately 110 million visits (rather than 79 million) are made each year. If that figure is accurate — and attendances at non-charging museums are notoriously hard to calculate — it would make museum-going the most popular cultural activity in Britain, exceeding even the 104 million attendances at cinemas over the past year.

What's more, 40 per cent of all adults visit one or more of Britain's 2,500 museums at least once a year, and virtually everybody has been once in their lives. And the survey goes on to suggest that despite the increased competition from home entertainment and other heritage and leisure attractions, museum visitor figures should increase to 130 million in the next ten years, or 150 million if the museums and art galleries become more "visitor oriented".

All this will be welcome news to the Museums and Galleries Commission, which commissioned the report. By *Popular Demand*, from the School of Business and Economics at Leeds University, Central and local government allocates £400 million towards subsidising museums and galleries, and the attendance figures give the impression that this is money well spent on a cultural area for which there is a healthy and increasing demand.

Later this week, moreover, the National Portrait Gallery will announce that it has welcomed its millionth visitor of 1994; it normally attracts about 650,000 a year. Visitor figures at the V&A are also believed to be 40 per cent up on normal. The image is that museums are experiencing a boom in business. With nearly 30 per cent of museum visits being made by children aged between 10 and 13 (and only a quarter of these on organised school trips) the future looks healthy. Many museums have ambitious plans for expansion and the National Lottery gives curators reasonable hope that money will be available.

Yet many of *By Popular Demand's* conclusions are far from optimistic. Yes, museums as a group attract a lot of visitors. But the average number of visitors per museum has declined considerably — from 72,000 in 1978 to 45,000 now. Some 500 new museums opened in the 1980s alone, many of them disused factories, docks or mines catering for a perceived new "industrial heritage" market. And since 1989 the number of "tourist attractions" of all sorts in Britain has increased from 4,700 to 5,500. Sup-

ply is now outstripping demand, says the report.

It goes on to question whether the assumption of many curators — that there has been "steady growth" in demand — is justified. "Growth has been very modest... generally the market is closer to stagnation than buoyancy." The biggest growth area has been in the smallest museums.

The imposition of admission charges in the late 1980s has had an enormous impact on attendance. "Since 1987 visits to free museums increased by 34 per cent, while those to charging museums decreased by 23 per cent." Where admission charges were imposed but then removed the number of visitors often doubled. Moreover, the report says that "charges deter visitors in some of the groups that museums would most wish to attract when extending their audience": young people and those on low incomes are examples.

Admission charges, the report notes, are only one way in which museums have responded to "the

Government's declared intention to reduce public subsidy and encourage greater self-sufficiency". Museums have also become more adept at seeking sponsorship and at marketing themselves over the past 15 years, despite such infamous own goals as the V&A's "ace caft" advertising campaign. But the report attacks what it

refers to as the "spray and pray" unfocused marketing used by many museums. They have "concentrated their energies on producing a 'product' and then sat back and hoped that sufficient people would be interested in it".

However, the report admits that "the single most thought-provoking observation is that there may be relatively little that individual museums can do to attract infrequent or non-visitors from all social classifications in large numbers." It summarises many of the recent surveys that have been undertaken into why people don't go to museums — surveys whose conclusions are generally summed up by the evocative title of one carried out by London museums three years ago: *Dingy places with different kinds of bits*. "The image of museums in many people's minds is still that of something 'Victorian, boring, dusty, gloomy and stuffy ... a monument to the dead'."

While acknowledging that this venerable image bears little relation to reality, the report does note the apparently insatiable demand for "interactive" displays, from museum visitors and non-visitors alike, though it cautions against plunging too wholeheartedly into a Disney-esque world of "hands on" fun. "A museum which seeks to change its image to attract new visitors may find that it has been deserted by its original customers," it says.



Steven Murray, aged 7, learns something of the meaning of life from a DNA structure exhibited at the Science Museum in London. Children are believed to account for a third of all museum visits

Some in the museums world would say that ideals of research, observation and scholarship have already been compromised by a new "theme park" ethos in museums. Last year, for instance, Peter Jenkins, a respected regional curator, wrote in *Museums Journal*: "We appear to be moving away from the ideal of access for all to a new environment where access is dependent upon the ability to pay; where

the establishment of programmes is based either on cynical, spurious or snobbish assumptions about what would be popular, or on the sponsorship that might be available."

By *Popular Demand* rightly states that museums cannot be judged on figures alone. Their quality and their extraordinary diversity — from the British Museum with its seven million visitors, to the tiny volunteer-staffed local museum open two

afternoons a week — are their true strengths. Nevertheless, it is that figure of 110 million visitors a year that will be most loudly trumpeted. Knowing that they are more popular with the British public than Hollywood movies will make our museum and gallery bosses feel a little more secure today.

By *Popular Demand* is published by the Museums and Galleries Commission, £15

POP: One precocious band, one provocative

Eerie echoes as mood turns mod

Gene Astoria 2

WITH just three singles to their name, one of which reached No 36 in the chart, Gene are already being talked up in certain sections of the music press as the Next Big Thing. The group was formed in London last year, with the aim of making music infused with the usual indie-rock influences — basically the Smiths — and leavened by a touch of Faces-style rhythm 'n' blues swagger.

On stage, their image chimed neatly with the mood of the latest mod revival, a saga now unfolding primarily in the music press. Singer Martin Rossiter, well-groomed and wearing a dark jacket, maintained a foppish air, while guitarist Steve Mason looked like a cross between Paul Weller and Steve Marriott of the Small Faces (circa "All Or Nothing"). With drummer Matt James and bassist Kevin Miles contributing little in the way of stage presence, the dynamic tension of the performance hinged on the interplay between Rossiter and Mason.

Staking out their territory with an opening salvo of "Be My Light, Be My Guide" followed by "Sick, Sober And Sorry", the young pretenders demonstrated an adequate

grasp of the job in hand, but lacked the authority to transform such songs into anything more than the sum of their influences. Mason, whose comprehensive mastery of the Ron Wood catalogue of riffs was at times quite eerie, turned out to be a more engaging performer than Rossiter, whose predictable stage moves did little to disguise a rather wooden vocal technique.

With its slower tempo and more reflective mood, their first (and now much sought-after) single "For The Dead" was among the highlights of a necessarily brief set that still seemed to sag towards the end. The energy level was restored by a finale of "Sleep Well Tonight", "I Can't Help Myself" and a rough-hewn version of the Beatles song "Don't Let Me Down".

Gene doubtless have the potential to become a much better and more successful band than they are. But they have been thrust into the spotlight at a precarious stage of their development.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Packing pews

Laibach Union Chapel, NI

ALTHOUGH the Union Chapel has sheltered both the godly and the avant-garde overspill from the nearby Almeida Theatre, the odds are high that Laibach were the first to play "Sympathy for the Devil" there. As the heavy drumbeats echoed through the pews, and blue searchlights scanned the vaulted ceiling, the Jagger/Richards classic provided but one thrilling, transgressive moment.

Controversy has always attended Laibach. Since their 1980 inception, the Slovenian band's use of monolithic totalitarian images coupled with a bombastic, orchestral electro, to create what they term *Neue Slowenische Kunst*, has caused disquiet and acclaim in equal measure. Laibach have, by a decade, anticipated heavy techno music. They also raise questions about the relationship between music, its mode of production and its consumption that place them among rock's most provocative participants.

This was borne out by packed pews for Laibach's first London appearance since Slovenian independence. "Nato", the title track to Laibach's seventh official album, opened proceedings with Ivan Novak, Dejan Knez and Ervin Markosek beating snare drums to Holst's "Mars". Behind them monochrome films depicted multinational logos and, at one

point, multilingual slogans. In his trademark alchemist's cap, singer Milan Fras stepped out from the dark, his guttural chant propelling the band through the entire *Nato* album. With pointy beard and sharp gestures, he made a compelling figure, who gave songs as diverse as Europe's "Final Countdown", DAF's "Alle Gegen Alle" and Zager and Evans' "2525" an apocalyptic feel. Taped choirs and an extra guitars and drums rhythm section increased its density.

After a short break, during which Fras perhaps gargled with rusty nails, Laibach presented self-penned material from two previous albums, *Opus Dei* and *Kapital*. The songs resounded with power and precision and the edges became more urgent, as if an intentional fragmentation was in progress. "Wirtschaft ist tot" and "F.I.A.T." were a blur of speed and light, surpassed only by Fras's declamatory approach to "Life is Life". There is something decidedly looped about turning the lyrics of *Opus Dei* into so portentous an anthem. Yet in Laibach's hands, it became a brilliant, shuddering thing.

LOUISE GRAY

CONCERTS: Holliger's inspirational energy, orchestral fluency in Russian, and Purcell for the stage

Treasure of a conductor

Not for some time has the English Chamber Orchestra sounded as alert and imaginative as it did on Friday night. For that there were perhaps three reasons. First, the band has enjoyed a rejuvenation recently of both personnel and, consequently, of musicianship. Second, the improvement in the Barican's acoustics benefits groups of this size and make-up particularly well: only the over-prominent horns caused problems. Third, the person in charge was the oboist Heinz Holliger, whose nervous energy infects everyone he works with.

The programme was of music by Haydn, Mozart and Antal Dorati. Dorati, who died in 1988, was of course best known as a fine conductor. While some were aware that he composed too, few who had not previously heard it could

ECO/Holliger Barbian

have suspected him capable of writing as fine a piece as *Trinito*, for cor anglais, oboe, oboe d'amore and string orchestra (1984, revised 1988). The idiom of this work — three movements each highlighting one solo instrument and separated by two atmospheric string ritornelli — is lyrical and highly personal. It possesses the same combination of intellectual rigour and concentrated emotions as Bartók (whom Dorati knew), though without the brutality.

The contrasts are extreme: Dorati affectionately pokes fun at Mozart and Schoenberg in his first central movement, "Burles" (Jest), while the final "Nenia" (Dirge) is a potentially charged affair of poignant



Holliger: clarity in oboe-playing and with the baton

desolation. One wonders what other treasures lie buried in his catalogue. Holliger played the work with his usual enticingly sinewy sound, shown also to advantage in Mozart's C major Oboe Concerto, K314. If there one sensed him pushing slightly too hard — his pitch was initially microscopically sharp — in the rapid passagework of the finale he was careful not to let the music run away with itself: the

resultant clarity of articulation worked to Mozart's advantage. He took similar pains in his conducting, so that Mozart's Symphony No 40 — given in the version without clarinets — retained its breadth as well as its brilliance, and the opener, Haydn's overture to his opera *Lisola disabitata*, bristled with drama without threatening to stumble over itself.

STEPHEN PETTIT

Safe and sound

Nearing the end of a tour lasting more than two weeks, with a very limited repertoire and a concert nearly every day, the Moscow Philharmonic must have approached the Corn Exchange in Cambridge with less than complete enthusiasm. It is an indication of the quality of its music director, Vasily Sinaisky, that it sounded almost as fresh as if it had just set out.

A big man who towers over his orchestra with an obviously commanding presence, he gets his results not by means of a sophisticated baton technique — he does not, in fact, use one — but by sheer strength of personality and with an expressive pair of hands.

Perhaps the most impressive achievement was the performance of the Ravel arrangement of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which they have played in most concerts on the tour and which is not the orchestral

Moscow PO/ Sinaisky Corn Exchange, Cambridge

musician's best friend in any circumstances. Entering the Great Gate of Kiev for the tenth time, they expanded under Sinaisky's encouragement to a full-scale celebration which had the audience cheering for minutes on end.

The audience was happy too with Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No 1 in B flat minor. By this stage on the tour, the pianist and the conductor might have been expected to have settled their little differences of technical opinion but, if it was a matter of choosing between perfect ensemble and spontaneity in interpretation, they were in agreement in the fundamentals at least. Christopher O'Reilly's playing gradually developed in stature, the orchestra apparently leading the way at first but eventually taking second place to the soloist's emotional commitment.

With the exception of Elgar's Introduction and Allegro, which they took the risk of presenting here and there, Sinaisky and the Moscow Philharmonic have restricted their touring programmes to the popular Russian repertoire. They might have been more daring but, when they offer such exhilarating cello playing as we heard in the *Russian and Ludmila* overture and such voluptuous woodwind colouring as there was in the Polovtsian Dances, it is easy to go along with them.

GERALD LARNER

Custom cannot stale his infinite variety

YET more Purcell? Yes, and I for one am not complaining. Stephen Pettitt writes. The recent surfeit of his music on disc and in concert has only further proved how great and how lovely his music is.

This concert was the latest instalment in the Purcell Tercentenary Festival devised by Robert King for the Wigmore Hall and mostly for his own group, the King's Consort, but here there were guest stars, the English Concert, who gave a mixed programme slightly misleadingly called "Music at the Theatre". Their approach to this music was admirably

pliant, according to its demands; delicately restrained, sharply and elegantly pointed, or simply and rumbustiously joyous.

Trevor Pinnock presided from a lovely harpsichord whose resonant tone sounded almost like a clarinet, as we heard most clearly in his playing of a suite in G minor which he capped with a brief hornpipe arranged from *The Fairy Queen* and included in the recently discovered and sold autograph manuscript.

He adopted the manner of a mild eccentric, welcoming us to theatre pit or inviting us to

English Concert/ Pinnock Wigmore Hall

his private music room. In this conceptual music room Nancy Argenta sang arrangements with harpsichord and cello of the songs "Ain't How Sweet it is to Love", "The Fatal Hour Comes on Apace", "Sweeter than Roses" and "From Rosy Bowrs" with sweetness, lightness and purity, though also with words forgotten and consonants swallowed.

Pinnock's use of a splendid trio of oboes, even in pieces where no evidence exists that that was what Purcell would have done, was naughty but effective. Yet how well this rich combination of sonorities worked, for instance, in the suite Pinnock fashioned from the incidental music for the plays *Abdelazer* and *Amphitryon*.

We all instantly recognised the Rondeau from *Abdelazer* — this is the tune that Britten used for *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* — but the other pieces encapsulated the ebullient humour (I partic-

ularly enjoyed the snappy "Scotch Tune" from *Amphitryon*), the unpretentious robustness and direct emotionalism which informs Purcell's art.

Yet if one form is particularly characteristic of Purcell, it is the chaconne, where above unpromising repeating bass phrases he habitually created inventions harmonically and expressively rich beyond measure. There were two of his best instrumental examples here: the Chaconne from the First Music in *King Arthur* and the final Chaconne from *The Fairy Queen*.

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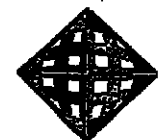
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LAW

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● LAW REPORT 42



The Law Society, which regulates the profession from its London offices, is accused of favouring the College of Law above other legal educators

Why the monopoly?

Nigel Savage demands an inquiry into the Law Society's relationship with the College of Law

After its first full year of operation, the Legal Practice Course (LPC), the new Law Society's training course, is generally acknowledged to have been a success. The review of the course has, inevitably, been caught up in a debate on the difficulty that students face obtaining training contracts. But the indications are that students, law firms and providers are well satisfied with the outcome of educational training.

Yet there remains a fundamental and potentially explosive issue that the society refuses to confront: its relationship with the major private-sector provider, the College of Law, in an increasingly competitive market.

The old Law Society Finals course was a single examination. The course was inexpensive to deliver, with large lecture/tutorial groups and few conditions in terms of educational experience and delivery. Student numbers were very low and could therefore be funded on a marginal basis. The College of Law received no state funding but benefited from economies of scale within a relatively unregulated environment.

The great change that the society introduced was to de-

velop delivery and assessment to the institutions. The universities were encouraged to apply to run the course and invest in the premises, staff and educational know-how needed for the course. With its emphasis on skills and the obvious need for small-group teaching, the LPC is expensive to develop and deliver.

The university sector responded and there are now 27 providers, in addition to the college, all of which invested heavily in the course and had a legitimate expectation that the society, having created a market place among the providers, would assume the proper role of independent regulator. It has not.

Students and practitioners consider the college to be the Law Society's educational arm. No wonder resources are devoted to investment in college subsidiaries such as Legal Network TV and that the college receives favoured treatment, such as granting a monopoly for provision of the solicitors' transfer test for overseas lawyers. That monopoly was granted with no form of competitive tender.

Worse still, the current president, deputy president and vice-president of the Law Society are all College of Law governors. Thus they occupy the highest office in the society and sit as officers of one of the providers. They thereby assume the legal duties and responsibilities to the college that a governorship brings. In a profession that prides itself on its ethical and professional standards, it is astonishing that such a conflict of interest should be permitted. To make matters worse, of the 19 governors of the college listed in the 1993-94 Diary, ten are council members of the society.

I can think of no other area of activity in which a major provider of a service in a market — 51 per cent of the total number of fulltime places — would be permitted to have its governors sitting on the council of regulatory body for that service or, indeed, have permanent representation almost *ex officio* on all the main education and training committees of the regulator.

I am not suggesting the

individual governors concerned are not highly qualified and distinguished persons, nor am I suggesting any abuse. However, for a regulator, independence must be paramount.

Suggestions are even being made that the relationship of regulator and major provider be given a royal seal of approval. In a recent article in the *New Law Journal*, Tony Holland, a former Law Society president and college governor, argues that it would be an attractive scenario to see the college and the Bar Inns of Court School of Law merged to form the Royal School of Law.

This issue cannot be brushed aside any longer. If the society did not want to sever its connection with the college, it should not have unleashed the forces of the market place in legal education. The Office of Fair Trading should look immediately at the relationship between the college and the society. It should also examine the relationship between the college and an elite group of university law schools which do not

provide a legal practice course, which appears to guarantee places to students on the college course in return for a promise by the university not to run an LPC. This arrangement potentially takes out of the marketplace a large number of students and reinforces an already dominant market position.

The university providers of vocational and training programmes are almost the sole source of innovation in legal education. It seems to be no coincidence that the only two LPC providers to receive commendations by the Law Society in the first year of its operation were from the public-university sector.

● The author is the dean of Nottingham Law School and managing director of Nottingham Law School Ltd.

The art and soul of entertaining lawyers

The end of the television series *LA Law* is a sad occasion for all those lawyers who enjoy going home from a hard day at the office or in court and sitting down in front of the television to watch fictional American lawyers have a hard day in court or at the office. Although past its best by the time of the concluding episode of the eighth and final series, broadcast two weeks ago on Sky One, *LA Law* deserves to be remembered for its very considerable achievements in television drama, including 15 Emmy Awards.

Skilful writing and acting, with large doses of humour, ensured that from the earliest episodes the main characters at McKenzie Brackman could easily fit into most solicitors' firms and sets of chambers in this country. The wise but pompous senior partner, Leland McKenzie, sought to maintain standards of propriety when most of his colleagues, and all but a few of their clients, were interested only in winning by any means. The concern of the managing partner, Douglas Brackman, systematically to balance the books contrasted with a private life which was beyond his control.

The divorce lawyer, Arnie Becker, had a compulsion to have an affair with every female client (and many of his female colleagues). The methodical tax lawyer, Stuart Markowitz, aspired to be an advocate, and escaped from rules and regulations only by forgiving the men who had beaten him up during the Los Angeles riots. Ann Kelsey (married to Stuart) combined a forceful courtroom manner with compassion for her clients, and their opponents.

The rest of the cast changed over the years as frequently as would the personnel of any law firm. The most interesting of the younger male lawyers, Michael Kuzack and Victor Sifuentes, left the series, the storyline referring to ambition and career moves that echoed the reality behind the scenes.

The best of the younger female lawyers were Abbie, Zoe and Grace Van Owen, each of whom spent periods away from the firm, whether in private practice or as prosecutors. They were all inferior models of the brilliant but fragile public defender, Joyce Davenport, Frank Furillo's girlfriend in *Hill Street Blues* (also created by Steven Bochco).

The credits showed all the lawyers at McKenzie Brackman rushing about at a frenetic pace when their professional insurance liability, as well as their health, would benefit from at least an hour a day sitting at their desks reading files of documents. The excess of adrenalin was, no doubt, because nobody in the firm ever litigated a standard

running-down action or defended in a prosecution resulting from a bar-room brawl. The cases were typically of an exotic nature: a rabbi with shaky hands who could no longer perform circumcisions safely, the spillage of valuable bull's semen, the rights of a performing dwarf, the duties of an employee afflicted by uncontrollable outbursts of Tourette's Syndrome.

As the storylines became more bizarre (if usually based on real American cases), so new, less credible characters were introduced, and then removed. The firm recruited Susan Bloom, an "entertainments lawyer" and an extrovert, even by Californian standards, and Rosalind Shays, a dominating senior lawyer who, after an implausible affair with McKenzie, disappeared in an equally improbable manner, down the lift shaft at the firm's offices.

But at its best, *LA Law* dealt in an informative and entertaining manner with serious ethical dilemmas in legal practice, the unreasonable demands of office politics, and the strains which litigation imposes on the mental health and the private lives of lawyers.



COUNSEL
DAVID
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Advocates committed suicide in court, were jailed for contempt and died of AIDS. Through Benny Subwitz (the retarded office clerk with a sense of values greater than that of anyone else at the firm), the series portrayed the mentally handicapped as adults with rights to work, vote and marry.

LA Law suggested to a generation of English barristers that cross-examination consists of asking a hostile witness whether he or she "leaves room for the possibility that..." any point made by an opponent is to be countered by requesting "permission to approach the Bench", and advantage can be taken of judges who are prepared to give counsel "just a little latitude". A generation of English solicitors has been led to believe, wrongly, that lawyers can do business over breakfast.

The programme began eight years ago with the death of Brackman senior. It ended with McKenzie securing an amicable settlement of a case in which a son was suing his father, and with the senior partner himself being persuaded by his colleagues to remain at the firm for a little longer, even though he is dying of cancer.

Of course, no popular television programme ever dies. Fans of *LA Law*, and those who want to know what they have missed, can watch repeats of an earlier series on Channel 4 late on Wednesday nights.

● The author is a practising barrister and a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

Lordly gossip

THE Lord Chancellor is soon to announce the appointment of two new law lords. Speculation is rife could we be about to have our first woman Lord of Appeal in Ordinary with the promotion of Rt Hon Lady Justice Butler-Sloss? Nobody is saying anything. "It's just gossip," said one official.

Legal first

A JUROR has been indicted for attempting to elicit bribes from a lawyer in a divorce case in Texas. The lawyer recorded a conversation where the juror asked for \$20,000 (£12,820) plus \$10,000 for each of five issues that could be resolved in his client's favour.

John Brook, Harris County assistant district attorney, told the *National Law Journal*: "It's the first time we've prosecuted someone for soliciting a bribe as a juror in a trial. The case shows the vulnerability of the whole system."

Thinking ahead

IN January, Allen & Overy will add four new partners to its Hong Kong office. Three of

INS AND OUTS

them, Michael Lui, Joseph Tse and Erick Ho are joining the firm from Hong Kong law firm Stevenson Wong & Co.

Kenneth Chan, a former consultant with Allen & Overy, also becomes a partner. Bill Tudor John, the managing partner, says: "These developments reflect the increasing importance to us of China work and Hong Kong-based corporate finance, banking and securities."

Taxing question

THE Inland Revenue has lost a battle over the tax status of freelance journalists. Their general commissioners found

that a journalist working shifts for several newspapers should not have been taxed at source under Schedule E.

The case does not provide a legal precedent but it will be hard for the Inland Revenue to argue differently in similar cases in future.

For the high jump

BAR Rugby has been relaunched under the umbrella of Gray's Inn's Football Club. It is open to players from all Inns, and the hunt is on for new ones — especially for a second-row forward to assist the present incumbent. He is

known as Rida because when he jumps at the line out, it is said you can just about force a cigarette paper between his studs and the pitch. Fixtures, Sunday lunchtimes. Contact: Michael Shaw, Desmond de Silva QC's chambers.

Arbitrary decision

British companies may have the wrong idea about arbitration. The City firm McKenna & Co approached those active in international trade, which should be avid users of arbitration. But, says Tim Hardy: "To our surprise, 65 per cent said they prefer court litigation, 20 per cent went for alternative dispute resolution and only 15 per cent said they preferred arbitration."

They should look again, says Mr Hardy. "Because the courts are taking steps to allow arbitration to proceed without interruption and there are positive signs that many of the perceived disadvantages of the arbitral process are no longer justified."

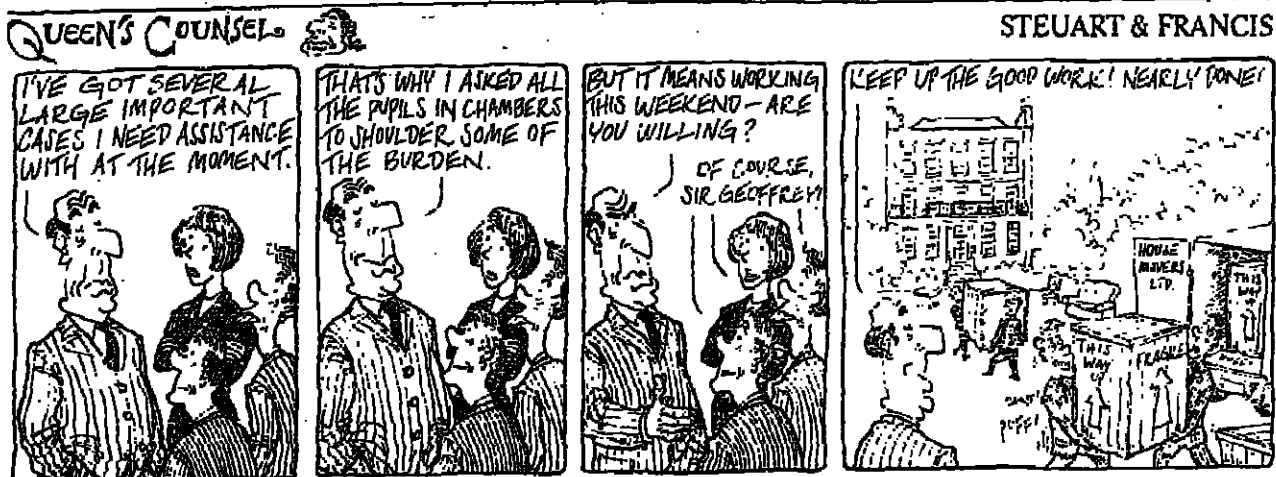
● FANS of Queen's Counsel below can acquire some of the original cartoons used in *The Times* at an exhibition at Thompson's Gallery, 38 Albermarle Street, London W1, from December 9 to 17. Details: 071-499 1314.



Lady Justice Butler-Sloss: will she be a first-ever?

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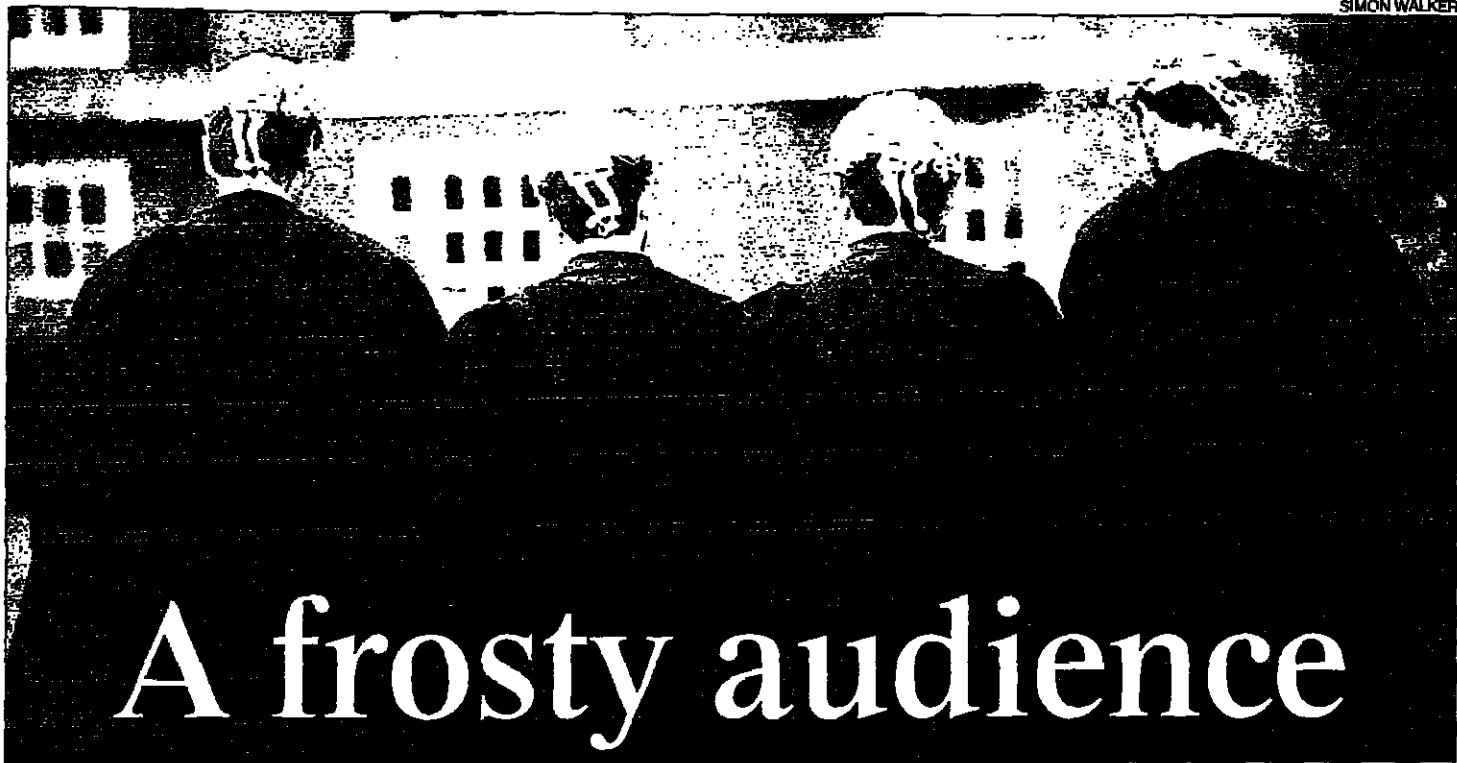
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Solicitor-advocates get the cold shoulder, while a judge refuses the task of assessing junior colleagues



A frosty audience

Twelve months after solicitors were first granted their new rights of audience, they are still facing unforeseen resistance in their fight to become accepted in the robing rooms of the Crown and High Courts. In the wake of the Lord Chancellor's final go-ahead last December, there has been an initial stampede of 140 solicitor-advocates wishing to exercise their new rights.

Another 32 with less experience are due to take the Law Society's first higher courts advocacy exams and assessment courses, which began last month.

Shawn Williams is chairman of an eight-strong solicitor-advocate chambers in Birmingham called Midlands Solicitor Chambers — the first criminal solicitors' chambers of its kind, and one of the largest in the country. As a criminal solicitor-advocate practising in the Crown Courts on the Midlands and Oxford circuit, he has heard stories of solicitors being badly treated by barristers. "One or two people have said to me that they are unhappy about the way they have been treated. Some have said they felt isolated in the robing room."

A typical obstruction is being deliberately misdirected to the lavatories when asking the way to the robing room, says Mr Williams. He believes that with a "small minority" of barristers there has been a "reluctance to co-operate".

"It has caused sufficient concern for a 'direction' to be sent to court centres requiring solicitor-advocates to be afforded proper changing facilities, so the 'barristers' robing room' simply becomes the 'robing room'." He has also heard of solicitors in London being barred

Solicitor-advocates have had a cool reception from barristers in their first year. Robert Verkaik reports on some of the difficulties they face

from the robing room by barristers who consider it their domain.

Then there is the question of wigs. Because solicitors are still not allowed to wear them, many solicitor-advocates feel they are immediately at a disadvantage to counsel.

Alan Kurtz, treasurer of the Solicitor-Advocate Association, made legal history this summer when he became the first solicitor to appear at the Old Bailey. He believes that most members of the Bar are "determined not to let us in". Mr Kurtz, who has sat as a deputy circuit judge, has been "waiting for a very long time" to be allowed to use his advocacy skill in the higher courts. "I've always thought it quite stupid that I was allowed to sit and conduct criminal trials as a judge, to address the jury from the bench and to direct the jury as to the law, but I was not allowed to appear as an advocate in the same case."

On the subject of wigs, his view was that of the association is that as long as barristers wear them, so should solicitors. "I make a point of including in my speech to the jury an explanation as to why I'm not wearing a wig and how this does not mean the barrister is saying anything more important."

The Solicitors' Association of Higher Court Advocates, of which Mr Williams is one of 80 members, hopes to find solutions to these teething problems through representations to both the Law Society and the Bar Council. A Bar Council spokesman said any friction between barristers and solicitors was "regrettable. The Bar Council does not have any problem with the extended rights of audience, provided solicitors are properly trained and regulated and they operate the cab rank rule."

The Bar Council also wants the client to be offered a free choice between a solicitor-advocate and a barrister, and is concerned that solicitors will direct them to their own advocates. But Mr Kurtz remembers times when he was left with no option but to make do with a pupil barrister, whose advocacy skills and knowledge of the case were far inferior to his own.

Another problem is that so far there are no forms for solicitor-advocates to claim their costs. Mr Williams says the only way round it is to adapt the solicitor form and seek to be paid on a temporary hourly rate.

Mr Williams believes that solicitors' chambers are "the way forward" and emphasises that this must be done in co-operation with the Bar. And he is quite happy for barristers to join his chambers. "All I'm concerned about is the quality of the individual: whether you call him or her a solicitor or a barrister is immaterial to me."

Walter Merricks is responsible for the Law Society's overall policy on rights of audience for solicitors. Apart from the surge of applications for exemptions from the test and courses, the response has been "slow", but he does not know precisely why.

"From the soundings we have taken we know there are about a thousand solicitors who would like to acquire higher courts practice," says Mr Merricks. One discouraging feature of the course is its cost. Candidates are expected to pay £1,700 for the two weekend courses. Mr Merricks says that while this seems expensive, the price is determined by the need to provide a high teacher/student ratio and thorough and fair assessment.

Those who have not been granted an exemption but want to practise in the higher courts must still show they are experienced advocates. Of those who reached this stage, only 34 out of 72 passed the criminal and civil evidence and procedure tests.

Mr Merricks explains: "This was not very credible. Quite a number of people clearly hadn't prepared themselves for it. Next year the Law Society expects to have 'trainer courses' leading up to the tests to help them to prepare. By that time, solicitors hope, the solicitor-advocate will have become an established figure in the Crown and High Courts — with unfettered access to the robing room."

'Some are misdirected when they ask for the robing room'

Not the job of a judge

Barristers must be trained by the professional bodies, not the bench, says Aron Owen, below

Last year's Royal Commission on Criminal Justice recognised that the best barristers are outstanding and that many are very good. But it also found that a small number were "incompetent, prolix and poorly prepared".

From sitting in the civil courts for many years I confirm that finding. But I never took the step of asking those counsel, whose performance left much to be desired or was downright abysmal, to see me in the judge's private chambers at the end of the case to advise them about their shortcomings and failings.

Such action is now being recommended in the recent report of the bar standards review body, *A Blueprint for the Bar*. It is even suggested that in some instances, the judge should take the matter further and report a barrister's incompetence in court to the head of his or her chambers.

It is said that in this way judges could become a kind of quality control mechanism for standards of advocacy. In my view this is an invidious proposal: it is asking judges to perform a distasteful task which is no part of their judicial function and one which they should not be required to do.

True, judges are now being encouraged to take a more positive and "hands-on" approach. "Over the last quarter of a century," said Lord Donaldson, a former Master of the Rolls, in a judgment he gave in 1991, *Mercer v. Chief Constable of Lancashire* [1991] 1 W.L.R. 376 at 373, "there has been a sea change in legislative and judicial attitudes towards the conduct of litigation, taking the form of increased positive case management by the judiciary..."

And Lord Justice Henry said recently: "I hope we can look forward to a time when judges will be more interventionist."

But the training of barristers in advocacy and how to conduct their cases in court must be left to the professional bodies. Judges should not descend into the arena to admonish or give advice to those appearing before them in a trial.

Of course, the judiciary can assist in the vital and essential teaching of forensic skills. They can act as consultants and take part, from time to time, in pro-

grammes for the practical training of advocates being carried out by the Inns of Court and the Council of Legal Education.

If, as proposed in the recent Bar Council report, an Advocacy Institute is to be set up, what are the main goals it should aim to achieve? Not every barrister could be trained to be a Marshall-Hall, a Patrick Hastings or a Norman Birkett. The skills possessed by such men are rare and, although welcome, are not of the greatest importance in civil cases where (apart from libel suits) a judge sits alone without a jury.



"Judges are being asked to perform a distasteful task"

These ordinary but fundamental requirements should not deter flashes of brilliance. This is how a young barrister opened his submissions in the Court of Appeal:

"My Lords. This is an appeal from a judgment of His Honour Judge Jones given at the Grandchester County Court, and the appeal is all about a contract. Now in a contract there are two parties, the offeror and the offeree, and the offer has to be accepted, and there must be consideration, and..."

At this point the presiding judge in the Court of Appeal interrupted and said: "Mr Evans, in this court, you can take it for granted that we know the basic principles of the English Law of Contract."

To which Mr Evans replied: "My Lords, I'm delighted to hear it, because the learned judge, from whom I'm appealing, didn't!"

● His Honour Aron Owen, until his retirement, was a Circuit Judge on the South Eastern Circuit. For many years the Resident Judge at the Clerkenwell County Court, he also sat in the Family Division at the Royal Courts of Justice.

How can law firms win in the new world of competitive tendering?

Beauty, the tender trap

Shoosmiths & Harrison, the regional law firm often described as a high-flyer, last week announced the forthcoming closure of its London office.

Fierce competition makes Shoosmiths unlikely to be the last of the only casualty. Has the beauty parade, otherwise known as competitive tendering of legal services, claimed another victim?

The evidence of the rise and rise of beauty parades and their gross abuse are legion. Of the 75 law firms which took part in a Department of Environment property conveyancing tender, only two firms were appointed, with price dominating the decision.

The days when firms could take the loyalty of their clients for granted have gone. At a

time of widespread pressure on prices, those who have shed their own staffing and infrastructure will not put up with outside professionals' over-bidding in manning or billing.

As a result — and often with the involvement of "knowing" in-house lawyers — major buyers of legal services are spreading their work more widely. They tell the much-relied-upon professionals that it is now company policy to put the work out to tender — with perhaps the sweeter that subject to price comparison they, as the incumbents, have a favoured position at the proposed parade. Don't believe it.

It is this commercial attitude which is changing the marketplace for lawyers. While the best of the "blue chip" legal

firms have survived the cruellest of business recessions, a number of full-service practices without the same all-round reputation for excellence have lost their places. In many cases this is because they were unable to provide unpretentious but quality legal services at value-for-money prices.

They are being supplanted by firms who have seen the consumerist reality as an opportunity, not a threat. A few non-London firms with country-wide presences have overtaken some of the larger City practices in the league tables. The new high-flyers appear to have prospered by claiming to offer City of London quality at country rates but with, interestingly, burgeoning City of London presences which will

become more expensive as rent-free periods and rock bottom rentals become a thing of the recent past.

Other practices stand on safer ground. They are the ones distinguished by their known superiority in particular fields.

The immediate future is, however, bleak for many previously profitable legal practices. A recent report by Coopers & Lybrand found more than 65 per cent of solicitors firms in England and Wales in financial difficulties, with a few even facing bankruptcy. It is not surprising therefore that the buyers of legal services are exercising their muscles in a marketplace where some are desperate for work.

The domino effect is that law firms frightened of losing their league places, pruning partners or slowing expansion are bidding for unprofitable work as long as it contributes to excessive overheads.

The wastefulness of large lists of law firm tenders can be avoided. Firms asked to parade and tender should agree only after obtaining satisfactory answers to questions such as: Why is the client thinking of switching firms? What is the volume, regularity and type of work on offer? How important is price? To whom would we report? Who else is parading? If clients decline to answer these, the parade should be turned down.

When tendering, firms should apply several golden rules, such as choosing your team early; briefing them on the client's concerns; using "inside track" lobby contacts; providing a costs and client-service protocol; and not buying turnover.

Those willing to provide important legal services at rock-bottom prices are likely to try to achieve a profit by cutting corners or over-delegating to juniors. They need to ponder on whether their discriminating clients will forgive any mistakes which may result from their bare-bones service. A better paid lawyer may eventually be needed to defend them.

DAVID MCINTOSH

County Court cheer

A test case means claimants may get more costs

PEOPLE who bring successful County Court cases will be able to recover their solicitors' fees up to a new record level of £300 an hour after a test case.

Until now, even if people win a County Court case, they have had to pay up to a third of their legal bill because of the low level of solicitors' costs the courts would allow. The level, which has not kept pace with the rise in solicitors' costs, was about £100 an hour. A recent test appeal brought by Gouldens, City Solicitors, and Lawyers Financial Management, the cost-draft specialists, led to a ruling that costs would be allowed up to £217 an hour for a partner in a City law firm.

Gouldens said the figure "represented an increase of

A nicker of 200 quid who gets nicked could get 300 nicker legal costs



100 per cent over the rate originally allowed for the disputed legal costs in the case and is believed to be the highest level of hourly rate awarded to date in respect of work undertaken in any County Court."

Allan Henderson, a Gouldens partner, said: "County Court litigants used to be left with a shortfall to pay, which arose because courts were increasingly out of touch with the real costs of litigation."

The case opened the way for litigants to recover fees of between £200 and £300 an hour, depending on the nature of the case and the work involved.

Martin Smith, of Gouldens, said: "This will greatly reduce the extent to which successful litigants will be left out of pocket." As a result, he said, they would be able to pursue claims which before they would not have done through fear of costs.

Peter Ashdown-Barr, of Lawyers Financial Management, said: "This case is a victory for litigants who reasonably instruct Central London firms of solicitors in County Court actions." They would now be able to recover most if not all their legal costs. "This," he said, "should make County Court litigation far more effective."

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Cruyff, the master craftsman and his method

David Miller talks to the great Dutchman, who has, uniquely, transferred his genius as a player to the art of coaching

It could be said that Johan Cruyff, in his prime, was superior even to Pelé: not as an individualist, but in the capacity to extract the most from other players around him. If Pelé was a sorcerer with his feet, Cruyff, like Di Stefano before him, was Pythagoras in boots.

The geometric complexities that illuminated Cruyff's play have been applied as coach of Barcelona with stunning success, not least against Manchester United recently in the European Cup Champions' League. The intelligence with which Cruyff applied a rare talent, for Ajax, Holland and, later, Barcelona, separated him from all but a handful of players in my lifetime. Few have been able to exact, both physically and mentally, such mesmeric control on a match from one penalty area to another. Di Stefano, almost judicial in his authority, often did for Real Madrid, so did the sleek Suarez for Barcelona and then Internazionale, though with less physical bravura.

Of the many occasions when Cruyff was awesome, during the three consecutive European Cup victories of Ajax in the early seventies, or in partnership with Rep, Krol, Neeskens, Hoen — all Ajax players — and Van Hanegem for Holland, the match I recall best was the destruction of Argentina during the 1974 World Cup finals. Two electric thunderstorms struck Dortmund that night: the more severe befell Argentina on the field.

Scoring one goal and creating two others, Cruyff, for 90 minutes, was untouchable. You never knew what would come out of the magician's hat next. With his extraordinary capacity to read the way a move would develop, or to make it develop, gliding about the field like an ice hockey puck, he was impossible to mark.

It is not often the great players become outstanding managers or coaches. Di Stefano and Suarez had undistinguished records. Great players like Matthews or Bobby Charlton exist, even within a team game, in a kind of mental isolation that divides them from lesser men's conflicts: stresses with which they have difficulty relating. Raich Carter, though I was too young to see him at his pre-war peak, was said by contemporaries to have been in the Cruyff's class, yet Carter as a manager was impatient with lesser players.

Cruyff's distinction as coach is a continuation of the system applied by Ajax, the Total Football in which all players are expected to operate the same principles in all parts of the field, principles based on movement and accurate passing: often, passing designed not to find space but to prevent the opposition filling that space.

To this end, Barcelona's training, other than for physical fitness, is almost entirely confined to



Cruyff at his imperious peak as a player, scoring for Holland against Argentina in the 1974 World Cup in a memorable second-round game in Dortmund

playing six-against-four, two touch, in an area half the size of the penalty area, about 20 yards by 20.

Cruyff explains. "In a small area, the movement is necessarily fast and the passes must be pinpoint. Two of the six, playing wide, repeatedly change 'team' whenever the 'four' gain possession... so it is always six with the ball against four trying to retrieve it. This possession principle should operate in any area of the

normal field of play. So our training is intense and is the basis of our game. Also, it is not widely realised that you can close down space more effectively by accurate passing, when you have the ball [forcing opponents into certain positions], than you can by man-marking without the ball."

Thus Barcelona's apparent absence of defensive formations: the measure of success of their training is evident in the degree to

which their play is attack-orientated. Consider, too, if you have watched them regularly, how often a receiving player successfully turns away from or past a marker.

"This ability is controlled not by the receiver but by the passer," Cruyff says. "If the receiver has his back to goal, the passer sends the ball to the foot on the side where the receiver should turn, reducing the arc through which he must control the ball to move. The passer can see the field in a way the receiver cannot. Often, of course, it's the receiver determining the direction of pass by his initial movement without the ball."

Most people recall the 15 consecutive passes made by Holland preceding the goal in the first minute of the 1974 World Cup final against West Germany. That was an example of closing down space. German players were kept in forward positions, 'closed down' without the ball, leaving space behind them to attack.

"Coaches talk about 'pass-and-go', but go where?" Cruyff asks. "If you pass repeatedly in a small area, as in our training, you are closing down opponents in one area. A larger, unoccupied area is then empty if you beat an opponent one-against-one."

That principle was at the heart of Barcelona's embarrassing exposure of Manchester United at the Nou Camp, exploiting the outdated 4-4-2 formation still used by United and by England.

"In England, you have your own style," Cruyff says. "dominating the European Cup for a while with Liverpool and Forest, then declining. You have not tried playing 3-5-2. Midfield carries the balance of every match. Control the midfield

and you control the game. We knew United were afraid of Stoichkov and Romario, so we set out to stretch United, make the gap bigger between their defence and midfield, giving even less protection to their back four. Koeman, our sweeper, played deep to pull United's attack forward. Stoichkov would go wide on the right, free because Pallister didn't go with him. Although Pallister and Bruce were left covering Romario, it was

still effectively one-against-one. Romario against Pallister, because Bruce was not between Romario and the goal as cover, but wide on his right (Romario's left)." Romario and Stoichkov ran riot.

A further product of Barcelona's training system is the use of sweeper in front of the central defenders, aimed at interception of passes on the ground and closer contact with midfield.

"The great strength of the English, which worries all foreigners," Cruyff says, "is the pace of their game, the quick movement of the ball forward; but so long as you allow yourselves to be outnumbered in midfield, you will not exploit this advantage."

Cruyff spends many hours working at the natural abilities of players: simple techniques such as right-foot/handed players having more difficulty heading left-to-right, as opposed to the instinctive right-to-left; and being at a disadvantage when meeting a cross from the left and needing to head at goal, to their right.

'Cruyff, for 90 minutes, was untouchable. You never knew what would come next'

Yet, as a former nonpareil, Cruyff is acutely conscious of how a coach can harm rather than help a player, how the 'fit' of a player is often wholly dependent on the coach. He points to the way Bergkamp, of Holland, fails to fit into the system at Inter.

Cruyff emphasises that the time for deciding whether to keep young players schooled in junior Barcelona teams arrives when they are only 12. "At that age, you know whether or not a boy is going to be a player. There are fundamental skills which you have or don't have, which cannot be taught after that age."

Barcelona set demanding standards. This season, they are as yet falling short of those, though they need only draw at home to IFK Gothenberg, leaders of their group, to eliminate Manchester United from the Champions' League, even if United defeat the Turks of Galatasaray tomorrow.

"We were tired even before the European Cup final against Milan," Cruyff says. "From February, we had a fantastic round of 15 games, from which we took 28 points to win the league in the last stride. The moment we did that, I knew, inside, that we wouldn't win in Athens [the final], that we were empty and couldn't do anything. That's not an excuse: it's reality. Our president, for all his hopes, fully understood."

This season, he feels Barcelona are still suffering from the added stress of the World Cup finals, in which they had 12 of their squad involved. "They are not only tired, but getting injured," he says. "It's not to be surprised they're not 100 per cent."

That was not how it felt to Manchester United.



Cruyff, the coach, instructing Stoichkov in Barcelona yesterday



British authors in libel trial

By JOHN GOODBODY

TWO British journalists will be tried, in their absence, in a court in Lausanne, Switzerland, tomorrow for criminal defamation and libel of Juan Antonio Samaranch, the president of the International Olympic Committee.

If found guilty, Yvonne Simson and Andrew Jennings, the authors of *Lords of the Rings*, could face up to 12 months in jail, although, as United Kingdom citizens, they are not required to attend the hearing.

Technically, it would be possible for the pair to be extradited if they were found guilty. However, in practice, any such action would be difficult because the area of criminal libel has fallen into disuse in England.

The book, which was published in 1992, was the runner-up in the Sports Book of the

Year awards in Britain, while a one-hour television documentary produced by the pair on the same subject won the gold medal at the New York television festival for best international documentary of 1992.

Lords of the Rings has been translated into 13 languages and has made a considerable impact on publication. However, no libel cases have begun in any country, except in Lausanne, the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

The book alleged that not only had there been widespread manipulation of sport for financial reasons but also that many of the activities of leading figures in sports politics are contrary to the spirit and ideals of the Olympic charter. In particular, the book outlined Samaranch's history during the Franco regime in Spain and his allegiance to the Fascist party. Many contemporary Spanish politicians and public figures also had prominent roles in Franco's regime, since anyone who wanted political involvement in the 37 years before the dictator's death in 1975 had to work with a totalitarian government.

However, the book implied that Samaranch's long active role with the fascists is incompatible with him being president of the IOC, an organisation with ethical associations.

Samaranch, 74, confirmed yesterday in an interview with a Greek newspaper that he was planning to retire from the post in 1997. The retiring age for IOC members is 75. He has been president since 1980.

Rejuvenated Vialli turns tide



ROB HUGHES
Overseas Football

Sometimes, to clear their heads of myths and excuses, Englishmen should look abroad. They might find that the suggestion of overpaid players losing appetite for the repetitive work of matchplay is destroyed in Italy, and that the notion of others losing the skills to be touch players is ridiculed by the burdens in Brazil.

No English player is remotely as wealthy as Gianluca Vialli. Few have had such a morale-sapping succession of injuries: fewer still could have given more stamina or ferocious competitive leadership than he did in Turin on Sunday afternoon.

Vialli plays for Juventus, affectionately known as *La Vecchia Signora* — the old lady. He picked himself up from three years of excruciating injury, picked the old lady up off the floor, where she has lain beneath AC Milan throughout the Nineties, and turned around a championship match in which Juventus were losing 2-0 at home to Fiorentina.

Vialli scored twice, once with his shaven head and again with his right foot, but it was his willingness to lead from the front, to run until his legs cramped up, and then to run and to urge players to move with him, that enabled Alessandro Del Piero to score a remarkable winning goal. He allowed the ball to come over his left shoulder and, with a flick of the right foot — almost like a squash player's use of the racket — lifted the ball over the advancing goalkeeper.

Del Piero shyly excused his winner with expressions that suggested he felt he had struck lucky. It appeared more like the instinct of genius, but when the youngster added that he had taken his

lead from the older player — for Vialli is now 30 — it was entirely believable. This may indeed be the turning point of the Italian season, the moment at which Juventus, despite words of doubt from their veteran paymaster, Gianni Agnelli, recapture lost glories.

Whether it is or not, it is indisputably the return of Vialli. He has been a conundrum: a man whose physiology, monitored by leading Italian scientists, is close to the supreme sporting animal. His lung capacity, his resting pulse, his low percentage of body fat compared to muscle, are a matter of record, a composite well in advance of the Italian mould. His morale is certainly that as well.

Quite why the muscular, bull-like figure had fallen

prey to so many different injuries is unfathomable. The latest, a broken bone in the foot suffered when taking a penalty, had struck him last season, one in which he played only seven times.

There is another reason why Vialli is so resurgent. Fit or not, he was used as a workhorse by Giovanni Trapattoni, the old defensive coach who has now transferred, as yet unsuccessfully, to Bayern Munich. In his place, Marcello Lippi, the youth coach at Sampdoria when Vialli was developing, has now taken the reins of Juventus, and released Vialli to forage with no fixed role as a front-runner.

From the thrill of watching, albeit through the keyhole of Channel 4's coverage, the

return to the full flavour of Vialli, the mind races ahead to Rio Grande. There, next Sunday, we have surely the ultimate in the cry that footballers are overworked. Gremio's president, Fabio Koff, describes the schedule for his club as the theatre of the absurd. Emphasising that absurdity, Koff's coach fields the majority of Gremio's 50 players in three first-team fixtures to be played on the same day.

The Brazilians are run from Rio de Janeiro by Ricardo Teixeira, the son-in-law of the Fifa president, João Havelange, and, if Havelange gets his way, his successor. Teixeira's way is to flood the season with game after game, procuring profit after profit.

Thus Gremio has the ludicrous prospect of three matches in one sitting. They intend to charge the fans a nominal \$1 to sit through the games — in the local league, the South American Super Cup, and the equivalent of Latin America's UEFA Cup.

Now let them tell you that the reason England cannot develop skills on a par with Brazilians is that this country pays and plays too much. Let them see the astonishing willpower of a fine Italian like Vialli. Let them wonder at the enormous journeys, up to 3,000 miles across the vast Brazilian nation, and let them ponder that, in the summer, it was Brazil that defeated Italy, on penalties after extra-time, in the most exhausting World Cup imaginable. Let them then excuse the lack of touchplay among English players, their lazy application to controlling the ball and making it dance to their tune, and let them explain why Brazil has won the World Cup a mere four times.



Vialli: relishing his fitness and new-found freedom

Hide agrees fee to meet Bowe

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

HERBIE HIDE has secured an improved offer to defend his World Boxing Organisation (WBO) heavyweight title against Riddick Bowe, of the United States. Hide has signed to defend for £2.3 million in the United States on March 18. The details of the offer by Rock Newman, Bowe's manager, will be released at a press conference in New York tomorrow.

Hide, who is building a luxurious house outside Norwich, had rejected £2 million a fortnight ago. He said yesterday: "This is the biggest fight of my life and I should be paid the right amount for defending my title."

Barry Hearn, Hide's promoter, expected the bout to be in Las Vegas at the MGM Grand or Caesars Palace. Hearn had hoped for a bigger increase by allowing the bout to go to purse bids at the WBO annual convention in Miami last Sunday, but finding that his tactic had brought him a better offer from Newman, he changed his mind on Friday.

"It's a small increase," Hearn said, "but we are happy. Having seen Bowe against Larry Donald, I have no doubt Herbie will do the job." Hearn believed Hide would be too quick for Bowe.

"I was in Las Vegas for Bowe's fight with Larry Donald, and it was terrible," Hearn said. "Donald ran like a thief in the night and Bowe could not land a clean shot. It was dreadful. Donald didn't even try to fight or even land punches."

"The judges gave the fight to Bowe by eight and nine rounds and on one judge's card, Bowe didn't even lose a

round. But what punches Donald did land marked up Bowe's face. Herbie is also a mover, like Donald, but Herbie doesn't run away, he fights and hits. I think Herbie will stop Bowe in eight or nine rounds."

Hide was impressive when lifting the title by knocking out Michael Benn last March. Bowe's trainer, Eddie Futch, was at Millwall that night to see the bout but was not convinced that Hide could do much better than Donald and did not expect the champion to last more than six rounds.

The ratings committee of the WBO has made Ray Close, of Northern Ireland, the No 1 contender for Chris Eubank's super-middleweight title. If Eubank beats Henry Wharton on Saturday, Close could be his next defence. It would be his third attempt at Eubank's title after a draw and a narrow defeat in the previous bouts.

Robert McCracken, the British light-middleweight champion, is to make a second defence of his title in an all-Birmingham encounter with Paul Wesley on February 10.

The contest, expected to take place at the Aston Villa Leisure Centre, will be McCracken's first in Birmingham since crowd violence erupted at the National Exhibition Centre in September before his British title defence against Steve Foster, of Salford.

McCracken, who is unbeaten and aiming to win a Lonsdale belt outright, will prepare by facing the Californian, Danny Chavez, at the York Hall, Bethnal Green, on Friday.

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Cheltenham objective for Coulton

By JULIAN MUSCAT

IN STARK contrast to the feature race at Sandown three days ago, the Tripleprint Gold Cup Handicap Chase at Cheltenham on Saturday has the makings of a competitive event after 17 horses stood their ground for the winner's prize of £36,000.

What makes these early-season steeplechases so fascinating is the clash between second-season novices and their more established counterparts. Saturday's encounter is no exception, with bookmakers favouring the promise of Coulton. Corals offer a best-priced 3-1 — to the more exposed of Dublin Flyer.

Having joined Oliver Sherwood's Lambourn stables in the close season, Coulton, the mount of Jamie Osborne, has scampered to two easy victories and now steps up in class. The seven-year-old, prone to jumping errors last season, will have to dismiss the opposition at Prestbury Park if he is to tackle the leading steeplechaser in the King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day.

Sherwood is to complete the gelding's preparation with a schooling session this morning. "Coulton has had two quick races so it is just a question of keeping him ticking over for Saturday," a spokesperson at Sherwood's stables said yesterday. "He is

in fine form and ready to race."

Dublin Flyer, a 9-2 chance with Ladbrokes, is an intended runner unless the ground deteriorates markedly, but Ian Balding is to consider the outcome of a blood sample before committing Crystal Spirit to the two mile five furlong chase. "My decision depends on the results of the test, which I'm expecting on Thursday," said the trainer of the seven-year-old, who returned home sore from an unsuccessful attempt at the Colonial Cup in South Carolina last month.

Another horse unlikely to make the line-up is Monsieur Le Cure, the Sun Alliance Chase winner, who cut little ice when a distant third behind Merry Gale at Punchestown last month. John Edwards, his trainer, said yesterday: "He blew up in the sticky ground in Ireland and I think that a horse needs two weeks to recover between runs. I shall have to talk with the owner but if he misses the Tripleprint, he would have to go to Ascot for the Betterware Chase next Saturday."

Flakey Dove, the Champion Hurdle winner, heads ten entries for the £35,000-added Bonuspho Bula Hurdle. Her trainer, Richard Price, confirmed that she will run unless the ground becomes too soft.

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FOOTBALL 43

THE GENIUS THAT
MAKES BARCELONA'S
DUTCH MASTER TICK

SPORT

TUESDAY DECEMBER 6 1994

CRICKET 44

MALAISE IN THE
ENGLISH GAME THAT
NEEDS TREATMENT

Learning capacity must not be overlooked

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE institution that is the annual University rugby match between Oxford and Cambridge may be under fire from anti-traditionalists, but while 58,000 — maybe more next year, when Twickenham's new West Stand is built and the refurbishment is complete — can turn up to watch it, the match will remain the most fireproof of the English game's spectacles.

Coaches may grumble that three years at university do nothing for a burgeoning sporting career; a handful of administrators may sniff that Oxbridge carries far too much weight in the governing of the game. Both views ignore the general level of perception, on and off the field, which products of the country's two senior universities did and do bring to rugby here and overseas.

A glance at the cross-fertilisation which has taken place at Oxbridge this term alone serves to indicate an enduring contribution to rugby. Oxford, embracing 11 graduate and four undergraduate students, from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, South Africa and the home unions, have toured in Canada and played Dudley Wood, the secretary of the decent student and club opponents at home, assisted by their Welsh

director of coaching and the Gallic input of Pierre Villepreux, their "visiting" rugby lecturer.

Cambridge, less cosmopolitan in content, perhaps, with only one New Zealander in addition to the domestic players, 13 of whom are graduates, retain a strong club fixture list — notably in respect of their Welsh connection — and toured Ireland before term began.

If such activity, materially assisted by the sponsorship of C T Bowring, does not help players towards a more rounded approach, to the game and in their general existence, I should be surprised.

Finance will be on the menu at Twickenham this morning before the universities meet for the 113th time, a series in which Cambridge lead with 51 victories to Oxford's 48. Their representatives will thrash out with the Rugby Football Union (RFU) a new formula over the sharing of gate receipts to be approved by the RFU committee meeting on Friday.

"Our position is that the time has come when the universities should contribute a bit more and, in principle, they agree with that," Dudley Wood, the secretary of the RFU, said. "The argument is that,



OXFORD UNIVERSITY

M T Joy (Marling, Stroud and Keble)
I R H Gray (RBA and St Catherine's)
S P Bromley (Cardinal Langley HS and Keble)
M S Nolan (Tonbridge and Pembroke)
G I Reese (St Michael's Univ Sch, Victoria, Harrow and Keble)
J M Kirsten (Diocesan College, Cape Town and Keble)
A N S Bryce (Glenalmond and Keble)
D S Henderson* (Glenalmond and Keble)
S C Thompson (Durham and St Cross)
N F C Martin (King Edward's, Birmingham and Keble)
P F Coverley (Glogowee Wood Coll, Dublin and New Coll)
J B B Daniell (Wanganui Collegiate, Eton and St Catherine's)
R V Allison (St Paul's and Templeton)
R S Yeasley (Haberdashers' Aske's and Keble)

* captain
REPLACEMENTS: 16 N J Marvel (OE Hospital, Bristol and St Catherine's), 17 C Jones (Easthamstead Park and University), 18 A A E Logan (The Leys and Christ Church), 19 D E Grant (Dorset Acad and Worcester), 20 E J Nesser (St Joseph's, Brisbane and Keble), 21 M G P S Orlor (King's, Canterbury and Christ Church).

here are we, rebuilding a ground and increasing the capacity, at a cost of millions. We think that, for a match like this, they can afford a bit more."

The teams today will leave others to worry about that. Oxford, the

holders of the Bowring Bowl, will start as solid favourites and with the potential to excel in the back division, where they possess wit and pace aplenty. Indeed, one who was a reserve back last year, the fit Sin Gareth Allison, has moved

from full back to flanker to win his Blue. His most serious problem, he confided, was understanding what his new forward colleagues were trying to say.

In particular, Oxford have Gareth Rees, the Canada stand-off half



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

A L Dalwood (St Albans and St Edmund's)
N J Walne (Caeleion CS and St Catherine's)
R G Harrison (Emrys's GS and Christ's)
S R Cottrell (Christ's College, NZ and St Edmund's)
A J Reynolds (Christ College, Brecon and Homerton)
M McCarthy (Mount St Mary's and Hughes Hall)
R J Davies (Gresham's and Downing)
L T Mooney (St Boniface's, Plymouth and Hughes Hall)
I Mackenzie (Brantwood County HS and Homerton)
M Q de la P Cox (St Columba's, Dublin and Hughes Hall)
A F M Malcaire (Sedburgh and Homerton)
A J Meadows (Sedburgh and St Edmund's)
R A Bramley (CEGS Wakefield and St Edmund's)
N D Richardson* (King's, Worcester and Hughes Hall)
E D Rollett (St Paul's and Magdalene)

* captain
REPLACEMENTS: 16 B R Simpson (Edinburgh Acad and Clare), 17 J G T Edwards (Coopers Company and Coborn, Uppinder and St Catherine's), 18 G W Fyfe (St John's, Johannesburg and Hughes Hall), 19 D M Mullen (Redcomb Coll, Cranston and Gorton), 20 A J Palfrey (St Cyprian's, Penarth and Hughes Hall), 21 R S Dix (Millfield and Homerton).

who expects to return on Saturday to play for his country against England and then resume club operations with Newport. Rees, 27, is a confidence player: as one who has appeared in two World Cups (a modest tattoo on one ankle records the fact, with room left for 1995) as well as the University match last year, the atmosphere will not disconcert him, whatever effect it may have on some of his more callow colleagues.

Long miss-passes and torpedo throws have been part and parcel of the Oxford game this term, and Villepreux, the last of whose training runs with the team was over the weekend, has been impressed by their capacity to absorb his "total-rugby" creed.

Much, though, may hinge on John Daniell's capacity to last the match. The New Zealander, at lock here though played as a flanker in the Wellington senior team during the summer, hopes that a damaged knee ligament will carry him through the game before the necessity of an operation, so that the Oxford lineout can bring the best from the quick Irish wings (both selected by Ulster this weekend) and Spencer Bromley, the centre who is bound for Harlequins after today.

Cambridge will look to a pack which has remained largely undisturbed this term to deprive Oxford of possession. They have exciting backs, notably James Reynolds, the Neath wing, but injuries have deprived them of cohesion. Given a broken field, however, Matthew McCarthy, also of Neath, will prove elusive to nail, and Steve Cottrell, the game's other New Zealander, has organised his colleagues well all term.

McCarthy is also his side's goal kicker, a substantial weight for such slim shoulders. Given good conditions, however, a positive attitude on the part of both teams and the significant contribution of the experienced referee, Stephen Hilditch, this could be a vivid game, of considerable movement, to eclipse memories of the somewhat shapeless offering last year.

Nevertheless, this will be the first occasion on which this particular Cambridge back division has played together. Over the weekend, the Light Blues went into monastic seclusion at Bisham Abbey, doubtless to be reminded of the many times when overweening favourites have ridden for a fall at Twickenham.

Wood's non-starter for 10, page 44

Llyall joins ranks of managerial casualties

By PETER BALL

JOHN LLYALL yesterday became the latest manager to succumb to football's increasingly frantic pressure for success. Llyall resigned from Ipswich Town two days after a home defeat by Manchester City left them bottom of the FA Carling Premiership.

They have won only three out of 17 Premiership games this season and were eliminated from the Coca-Cola Cup by Bolton Wanderers. Their defeat on Saturday, their seventh at home, was followed by a demonstration by supporters against Llyall and the Ipswich board.

With the cost of failure now so great — relegation from the Premiership is believed to cost a club at least £5 million — Llyall's departure seemed almost inevitable. It is no coincidence that all the teams in the bottom four of the Premiership have changed their manager in the last month, although Leicester City lost theirs against their will.

The others were, though, Llyall's departure — by "mutual consent" — following quickly on the dismissals of Mike Walker at Everton, Ron Atkinson at Aston Villa and Osvaldo Ardiles at Tottenham Hotspur. However, in keeping with Llyall's status as one of the most respected managers in the game, and the reputation of the club, this one at least was carried out with dignity. Llyall resigning before he was pushed.

"In view of the present situation at club I have decided to resign," Llyall said

in a statement. "This action was my decision and in taking it I hope the club will achieve success. Normally in this situation there is animosity between the chairman and manager. I can only state that my respect and admiration for John Kerr is immense, and I hope he can lead the club to great successes in the future."

Llyall's sincerity cannot be doubted, but it may prove a formidable task for his successor, even if Nottingham Forest, Norwich City and, in their idiosyncratic way, Wimbledon have proved that, with sound foundations and good management, it is possible for a medium-sized club to succeed in the Premiership. Paul Goddard, the joint first-team player-coach, takes temporary charge.

Llyall's most notable successes came with West Ham United, with whom he spent 30 years as player, coach, and then manager from 1974-89. He led them to third place in the first division, their highest position, in 1986, but was unable to maintain their progress and was replaced by Lou Macari.

Ipswich, a club with a similar reputation for loyalty, sound management and good football, seemed the perfect spot for Llyall when he joined them in 1990, taking them back to the first division in his first season. Since then, things have proved more of a struggle.

Last season, Llyall became general manager, with Mick McGivern, who had come with



Llyall celebrates his appointment at Ipswich Town in 1990. His initial success proved difficult to maintain

him from West Ham, becoming first-team coach. The club only survived in the Premiership on the last day of the season and their defensive tactics — at odds with the club's traditions and Llyall's football background — alienated their supporters.

In the summer, the Ipswich

board revised the club's structure. McGivern took over the youth programme — the basis for Ipswich's success under Bobby Robson — with Llyall reverting to managing the first team.

In an attempt to bolster a limited squad, Ipswich signed Steve Sedgley for £1 million

from Tottenham, the Dane, Claus Thomsen, and a Uruguayan, Adrian Paz. It made little difference. That the fee for Sedgley represented a club record at a time when Norwich were receiving £5 million for Chris Sutton emphasised the problems Llyall faced.

But if Llyall's successor faces

a difficult task, there will be plenty of takers for one of the most secure jobs in football. Mike Walker, who had success at both Colchester United and Norwich, would seem an obvious candidate.

Cruyff the master, page 43
Rejuvenated Villa, page 43

Leicester step up Little protest

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

LEICESTER City yesterday confirmed that the club is demanding a full inquiry into the appointment of Brian Little as manager of Aston Villa. The Leicester chairman, Martin George, is to hand the Football Association and the FA Premier League information on Little's recent resignation as the manager at Filbert Street and subsequent appointment at Villa Park.

Little resigned two weeks ago and became the Villa manager three days later, but Leicester insist his resignation was only accepted because he promised he would not be the next Villa manager.

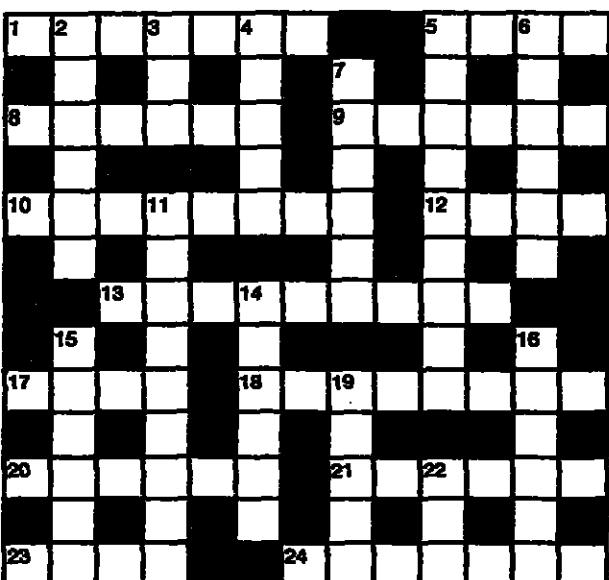
"We are not going to let this lie and are considering several courses of action," George said. A bid to obtain an injunction to prevent Little continuing as Villa manager was thrown out in the High Court last week and now City hope the FA will step in and instruct Villa to pay compensation.

John De Wolf, the Holland defender, completed his £600,000 move to Wolverhampton Wanderers yesterday before revealing he had

taken a pay-cut to move from Feyenoord to the Midlands. De Wolf, who is 32 on Saturday, said: "I was determined to play in England. I am coming here for less money, but money is not important to me. Playing in English football is everything." Wolverhampton also completed the £1.1 million capture of the Sunderland striker, Don Goodman.

Non-league Altrincham will be compensated by the FA if their third round FA Cup clash against Tottenham Hotspur is scrapped. The Vauxhall Conference club are scheduled to play at White Hart Lane on January 7, but they will be given a bye into the last 32 instead if Tottenham's Cup ban is confirmed.

Bristol Rovers will build a £25 million sports complex on the banks of the River Severn. The centre, which will also include an exhibition hall, will cater for athletics, speedway and greyhound racing as well as football. For eight years, Rovers have shared Bath City's ground. They hope to move in to their new ground by August 1997.



TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 337

ACROSS

- 1 Attribute (to) (7)
- 5 (To) stuff (4)
- 8 Pestilence (6)
- 9 Period when one is not at one's best (3-3)
- 10 Perplex (8)
- 12 Neat (4)
- 13 Noisy pursuit of criminal (3-3-3)
- 17 Audacious (4)
- 18 Diffuser of heat (8)
- 20 Continuity break (6)
- 21 Formally confirm (6)
- 23 Join (metal) together (4)
- 24 Shoulder-blade (7)

DOWN

- 2 Resentfully unsocial (6)
- 3 Students' prank (3)
- 4 Harmonise: mixture (5)
- 5 Self-service restaurant (9)
- 6 Language of the Koran (6)
- 7 Joseph — Polish/English novelist (6)
- 11 Swamped (9)
- 14 From one side to the other (6)
- 15 Dull, stolid (like cattle) (6)
- 16 Miserable (6)
- 19 Plainest classical architectural order (5)
- 22 Make use of (3)

SOLUTION TO NO 336

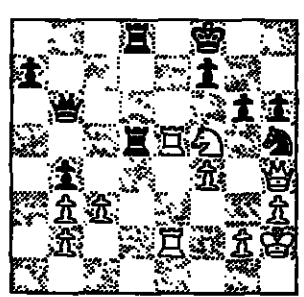
ACROSS: 7 Hoary 8 Selfish 9 Pothole 10 Macon
11 Nook 12 Throttle 15 Unstable 16 Fief 19 Pumps
21 Glacier 22 Torment 23 Abhor
DOWN: 1 Chopin 2 Captious 3 Pylon 4 Flummox
5 Disc 6 Chance 8 See the light 13 Twilight 14 Banshee
15 Uppity 17 Furor 18 Banal 20 Mare

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

This position is a variation from the game Alekhine-Tarrasch, St Petersburg, 1914. Can you spot Alekhine's intended winning coup which forces checkmate in three moves? World champion Garry Kasparov has always claimed Alekhine as his role model. This brilliant finish explains why.

Solution, page 44
Raymond Keene, page 7



WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

BLACKBURNIAN

- a. An anti-Yorkshire joke
- b. A blackthorn walking stick
- c. A warbler.

CATANANCHE

- a. Force majeure
- b. A blue flower
- c. The Breton apron

DINGUS

- a. A fiery rash
- b. A thingy
- c. A wild dog

GALJOEN

- a. A fish
- b. A Dutch kitchen maid
- c. A village headman

Answers on page 44

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